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# Tactical operations for field officers

Wilkinson J. Shaw

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VOL. XI.

# *TACTICAL OPERATIONS FOR FIELD OFFICERS.*

Shaw

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*Outline Sketch of Walsh's Rath at the Curragh*
*To illustrate Tactical Operation. N.*
*as it appeared from Rocky Knoll.*

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# TACTICAL OPERATIONS

FOR

# FIELD OFFICERS;

BEING UP-TO-DATE SCHEMES WORKED OUT ON TRAINING-GROUNDS AT HOME STATIONS.


NARRATED, ARRANGED, AND EDITED, WITH APPROPRIATE CRITICISMS,

BY

LIEUT.-COLONEL WILKINSON J. SHAW, P.S.C., M.A.

*Author of*

*"The Elements of Modern Tactics," "Studies in Map Reading and Field Sketching," "Studies in Field Engineering," etc.*


WITH NINE MAPS.

**Being the Eleventh Volume of Military Handbooks.**


LONDON:

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO., LTD.

PATERNOSTER HOUSE, CHARING CROSS ROAD.

1903.



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To

THE OFFICERS OF THE BRITISH ARMY.

*Although this book is primarily written for the use of officers of field rank practising to command combined forces in tactical movements, the Author confidently expects that it will be helpful in many ways to officers of all ranks. He therefore ventures to commend it to their attention by the above dedication.*

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# INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

## BY THE AUTHOR.

In submitting the following work to the criticism of the military public, it appears to the Author that a few explanatory remarks as to the circumstances under which the book was originated, and also as to the best method of utilizing it by those who study its pages, may not be out of place.

The Author has coached field officers for their "Tactical test for Command" ever since the examination was instituted, and has therefore an intimate knowledge of their requirements, a considerable number of the majors of all branches of the Army having during that time passed through his hands. As regards their paper or indoor examination, he has had no difficulty whatever in preparing them for it by means of correspondence papers. Their practical examination, however, in which they are placed in command of a small force of the three arms and pitted against a similar force in a tactical operation, carried out on one of the training-grounds of our large garrisons, presents many difficulties to those who have

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had no previous experience in command of troops at minor operations; and the candidates can obtain as a rule but little assistance to guide them in their preparation for this ordeal, except by a theoretical study in their quarters of imaginary fights on an invented map of unreal country, and by attending peace manœuvres at home, when it is difficult to quickly grasp the situation as a mere outside spectator; or else in exceptional cases by visiting at considerable personal expense various out-of-date battle-fields on the continent of Europe.

It has therefore been suggested to the Author that if exercises of a similar character to those in which the officers will be engaged at their examination, including some of the problems already set at the various stations, worked out in each case on one of the actual training-grounds mentioned, were prepared with suitable maps in a convenient form, the examples thus presented might be of the greatest possible service. Officers could take the schemes to the ground and follow them out map in hand, seeing how the conditions given were met, and judging for themselves as to the propriety or otherwise of the steps taken by the commanders of the respective sides reported in the narrative. The Summing up and Comments added to each problem would, it is hoped, indicate to them in a forcible manner the incidents of most importance in the operation from a tactical point of view.

As regards the schemes, of which four are given for

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each of the following stations: Aldershot, Shorncliffe, Colchester, and the Curragh, it will be seen by the title-page that they are "narrated, arranged, and edited" by the Author, and this exactly describes the manner of their preparation. The general method followed with schemes which have actually been set and worked out with troops on the training-grounds—permission to use these being in each case accorded to the Author by the General Officer commanding at the station—has been to base the details as far as possible on the reports, and orders as issued, obtained from the various field officers in command of the opposing forces, generally, but not always, officers who have read with the Author. These details have been worked up into a narrative form, and such descriptions of ground have been added as appear necessary to enable the reader or student to follow out the operation on the map. Where sufficient details have not been available, the gaps in the narrative have been filled in by officers who have gone over the ground again, and supplied whatever was necessary for completing the record of the exercise. Incidents of action have been freely modernized where necessary to meet new conditions, and will, it is hoped, be found in accord with the principles laid down in the most recent red books. Amongst the radical changes to be found in these latter, however, there is one which does not affect these exercises. The increased range of field artillery does not come in at all. The necessary conditions of the practical minor operations carried out at

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our various garrisons, on such very small areas of ground, prevent any extension of the old-established ranges for artillery fire. Frontage of a more extended nature than formerly, more respect for the powers of the defence, more frequent use of the counter attack, and an extensive employment of mounted troops when available, are the chief changes possible, and these have been carefully considered in all the schemes prepared.

Besides the exercises which have been already set, others are introduced, as explained in each case at the commencement of the scheme, and there has been no lack of willing assistance by skilled officers, either in the suggestion of suitable Ideas, or in the working of them out under service conditions on the ground.

One officer in particular has helped the author with untiring zeal from the first conception of the book to its completion. His practical knowledge of tactical details has been invaluable in testing the schemes on the ground, and his criticisms, many of which enter into the comments on the various operations, have been extremely useful. He has, moreover, kindly assisted both in the labour of correcting the proofs and in the preparation of the maps. The sketch of Walsh's Rath in the frontispiece is furnished by his facile pencil.

Other helpers have tested the schemes on the ground, and examined them from a topographical point of view, a troublesome but necessary process.

The Author's best thanks are due for these services,

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without which the book would have possessed but little value.

A few words may be added on the subject of writing "orders," which always seem to present some difficulty to those who have not had practice in their preparation. The latest instructions on this head are given in "Combined Training," 1902. We are there told that orders on service are of three kinds: standing orders, orders of the day, and operation orders. With the last of these we alone have to deal in the following exercises.

Operation orders are as a rule to be issued in such form as to embody the instructions for each portion of the force in one "single document," which can thus convey to every unit the intended operations of the whole force. Occasionally separate orders may have to be issued to a detached force or unit, but under ordinary circumstances combined orders will be found to be sufficient.

In any case the heading of the orders will indicate the nature of operation when possible, the force to which it applies, and by whom issued. Thus, march orders, attack orders, outpost orders, advanced guard orders, by ——, naming in each case the officer in command of the force. A detail of any troops named in the order will usually be given in the margin. The order will either be signed direct, in the case of small forces, by the officer in command, or else it may be signed, by order, by an authorized staff officer.

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The wording of orders should be clear, terse, and as brief as possible without omitting important points. The usual sequence of contents may be taken as follows :—

Information regarding the enemy, or the situation.

Information regarding our own forces.

Intentions of the commander.

Orders for various portions of the force.

Position of the commander.

In nearly all cases where the orders are handed over personally to those concerned, verbal explanations will be found very useful.

The Author has been recommended to add to these remarks a note of the numerical strength of the various units employed in the schemes.

He therefore explains that each battalion of infantry may be taken at a maximum strength of 800 men, or 100 men for each of eight companies, and at a minimum strength of 640 men, or 80 men for each of eight companies. A squadron of cavalry may be taken at 96 men, divided into four troops of 24 men each. A section of mounted infantry is made up of 30 men. A field battery consists of 166 men and 102 draught horses, moving six 15-pr. B.L. guns, and (say) six ammunition wagons. A horse artillery battery has 174 men with 106 draught and 80 riding horses, accompanied by six 12-pr. B.L. guns and (say) six ammunition wagons. A field company of engineers has 205 men, with 63 horses and eleven carriages.

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A bearer company has 94 men, with 56 horses and fifteen carriages, of which ten are ambulances. A field hospital has 56 men and 28 horses, with six carriages. All these units, in addition, have a proper proportion of officers.

In concluding his remarks, the Author would wish to say, alluding to his dedication of the book to the "Officers of the Army" generally, that he earnestly hopes it may be of service to all ranks.

Long before the period at which an officer may aspire to the grade of "Second in Command," he should turn his attention to the matters treated of in these problems. They will, it is anticipated, interest him in the study of similar tactical exercises, and if so the Author's labours will not have been thrown away, but may produce in the future some good results which at present he cannot foresee.

WILKINSON J. SHAW,
Lieut.-Colonel.

ROSE HILL LODGE,
DORKING, SURREY,
*October* 1, 1902.

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# TACTICAL OPERATIONS FOR FIELD OFFICERS.

## A.

## TACTICAL OPERATION AT ALDERSHOT.

(*See Maps* 1, 2.)

INVADING FORCE *v.* DEFENDING FORCE.

*March* 31, 19—.

THIS scheme was originally set at a Field Officers' Examination held at ALDERSHOT, under the General and Special Ideas here given, in March, 1896. The AUTHOR at the time in question prepared a report of it from notes given to him by the leaders on each side, and the record of the scheme so prepared has since been used as an exercise by officers reading with him. It, however, became out of date so far as some of the movements went, and the AUTHOR has now rewritten it, and altered it to meet new conditions. It has been again carefully compared with the ground, and the topographical references and descriptions, as well as all distances given, have been checked. Permission has been accorded to the AUTHOR, by the GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING at ALDERSHOT, to make use of the



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General and Special Ideas of this scheme for purposes of publication.

*General Idea.*

An Invading or Western Force, moving in an easterly direction from BASINGSTOKE, is opposed by a Defending or Eastern Force operating from GUILDFORD.

*Special Idea. Western Force (Blue).*

"From O. Cg. Army Corps, BASINGSTOKE. "BASINGSTOKE,
To O. Cg. Advanced Guard, ODIHAM. *March* 30, 19—, 7 *p.m.*

"I must bivouac at BOURLEY to-morrow, in order to obtain water. Take up a position with your command (one squadron, one field battery, and two battalions, with a half bearer company) to cover my force, so that I may be unmolested in the bivouac. The advanced troops of the enemy were seen at ASH at 6 p.m., this day."

Place of assembly: BOURLEY BOTTOM, at 9.30 a.m., March 31, before which hour no troops to be east of a line through the BOURLEY RESERVOIRS.

*Special Idea. Eastern Force (Red).*

"From O. Cg. Defending Army, GUILDFORD, "GUILDFORD,
To O. Cg. Advanced Guard, ASH. *March* 30, 19—, 5 *p.m.*

"At 3 p.m. to-day the enemy was driving off stock from the farms near DOGMERSFIELD; push him back to the westward as soon as you can. I will support you at 6 p.m. to-morrow."

Place of assembly: WELLINGTON AVENUE, at 9.30 a.m., March 31, before which hour no troops to be west of the TALAVERA BARRACKS.

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N.B.—The tactical operation, as will be seen from the foregoing, resolved itself into the action of opposing advanced guards. MAJOR A. was to command the Western or Blue Force; MAJOR J. to command the Eastern or Red Force, the strength of which was the same as the Western Force.

Boundaries :—On the north, an east-and-west line from CLUB HOUSE through FORESTER'S ARMS P.H.; on the south, an east-and-west line 30 feet below crest of CÆSAR'S CAMP and HUNGRY HILL.

Topographical Hints :—CENTRE HILL is a low sandy hill marking the centre of the LONG VALLEY at ALDERSHOT. From this point, as the crow flies, BASINGSTOKE lies $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles W., GUILDFORD lies $9\frac{1}{2}$ miles E., ODIHAM is $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles W., ASH is $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles E., and the FORESTER'S ARMS is 1 mile N.W.

## *Narrative. Western or Blue Force.*

Copies of the General Idea and of the Special Idea for the Blue Force were handed to MAJOR A. on the ground at 9 a.m. in sufficient numbers to allow of their being issued to each officer in command of a unit.

MAJOR A., having consulted his map, formed the opinion that a position at JUBILEE HILL would best cover the intended bivouac at BOURLEY. He therefore determined to send his cavalry on rapidly to seize this hill, to be followed by the field artillery. The guns to take up a commanding position on the hill, under protection of the cavalry until the infantry could also arrive. The battery to be so disposed as to be concealed from the enemy's view until it was necessary to come into action.

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Having thus considered the situation, MAJOR A. wrote "Operation Orders" for the force, in doing which he was enabled to omit a recapitulation of the General and Special Ideas, as they were already in possession of the officers concerned. The orders were entered in the authorized army book, No. 153, and, the leaves being removed as they were written, were personally handed to officers commanding units, accompanied by such verbal explanations as seemed to be necessary on part of MAJOR A.

**March Orders; by O. Cg. Western Force (Blue).**

BOURLEY BOTTOM.

To Os. Cg. Units. *March* 31, 19—, 9.20 *a.m.*

1. My intention is to take up a position, with my command as per margin, at JUBILEE HILL, to cover the bivouac of troops at BOURLEY.

*One squadron.*
*One battery.*
*Two battalions.*

2. Cavalry will advance rapidly, and reconnoitre roads and ground leading eastward, at same time occupying JUBILEE HILL in advance of the artillery. One troop as escort for guns.

3. Artillery will take up concealed position on JUBILEE HILL, facing east.

4. Infantry will advance and take up temporary position on JUBILEE HILL in prolongation of guns.

5. A dressing station will be formed by the bearer company at CROSS-ROADS west of RESERVOIRS.

6. I shall be with the artillery.

(Sd.) A.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

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The orders being issued and explained, the cavalry in particular being enjoined to make a rapid advance in order to secure JUBILEE HILL before an enemy could do so, the troops marched off at 9.30 a.m. in an easterly direction; the bearer company proceeding same time to the RESERVOIRS.

MAJOR A. accompanied the artillery, which, on reaching the hill, chose a position just behind the eastern crest of the highest part, about 100 yards north of the BOURLEY road, The slopes on the eastern side of this part of the hill were steep, and a good command obtained of the ground in front from the summit. The guns were not, however, placed yet in the actual position selected. They were carefully unlimbered behind the summit, "action front," at full intervals, with the intention of running them up by hand to the crest when the time for opening fire should arrive.

The cavalry, on moving out, formed a screen to cover the advance against any action on part of the enemy's cavalry, which latter was quickly in evidence coming up from the east. The cavalry of the Blue Force, on seeing the enemy, drew together, and on getting near enough, finding the ground favourable, charged the Red cavalry and drove them back.

The Blue infantry, meantime, moved forward in small column formations to the position, covered by an advanced guard of No. 1 Company Royal Scots Fusiliers, in very extended skirmishing formation, with scouts out front and flanks. As it arrived at JUBILEE HILL, MAJOR A. ordered the commander of the Fusilier battalion to furnish two companies for firing line and supports on left of the artillery,

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with a frontage of 300 yards; also two companies for local reserves behind the hill. The remaining four companies of this battalion were to be kept in hand for a general reserve, the position of which was not yet fixed. Nos. 1 and 2 Companies were in the firing line furnishing their own supports, Nos. 3 and 4 were as local reserves, and the left half battalion, Nos. 5, 6, 7, and 8 Companies, for general reserve.

When the other battalion, 2nd East Lancashire Regiment, came up, MAJOR A. directed the commander to prolong the JUBILEE HILL position on to STEEP HILL, with a frontage of 300 yards, to be held by two companies in firing line and supports; also to place two companies as local reserves behind the hill not far from the BOURLEY road, so as to be ready to reinforce the right centre if necessary, the gap between JUBILEE and STEEP hills being a weak point. Four companies were retained for general reserve. Nos. 1 and 2 Companies were told off for the front line, Nos. 3 and 4 as local reserves, and the left half battalion, Nos. 5, 6, 7, and 8 Companies, formed part of the general reserve.

MAJOR A. now himself superintended the posting of the four companies from each battalion as general reserve. They were placed behind BOURLEY HILL. An observation post of infantry, with signallers, was established on BURNS HILL, to look out for a possible movement on part of the enemy through the OUTRIDDEN COPPICES to turn the left flank and rear. An order was also despatched to the cavalry to send a good scout, with two signallers, to the north-east slope of CÆSAR'S CAMP (keeping the prescribed level of 30 feet below crest). From this situation the

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whole position taken up could be easily overlooked, and also the lower ground which lay behind the RIDGE south-east of the position. This RIDGE sprang from the north-east spur of CÆSAR'S CAMP, and extended as an under-feature until it terminated at SUNNY HILL, near the ROYAL PAVILION.

In disposing the infantry, the companies furnishing firing line and supports arranged themselves so that each company had half its strength in the firing line and half in support. The firing line in their allotted positions, on each side of the battery, had complete command over the ground which must be passed by the enemy in order to attack the east side of the hills. The supports and local reserves were protected by the shape of the hills, and were so placed as not only to be near at hand when wanted, but to be out of fire until the moment for action arrived. The general reserve companies were situated so as to be capable of being moved up to the JUBILEE HILL—STEEP HILL line if required, or else, a more probable contingency, to be utilized to meet a wide turning movement on part of the enemy.

By the time that the troops were in position, MAJOR A. was informed by his cavalry that the enemy's artillery was moving in the direction of CLAYCART HILL, and that an infantry force was coming up on the north side of the ROYAL PAVILION.

At 9.50 a.m. the attention of the Blue COMMANDER was attracted to CLAYCART HILL, where he saw artillery moving between the coppices. With his glasses he was able to observe guns taking up position at about 1200 yards from JUBILEE HILL. He did not open fire upon

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them, as he was unwilling as yet to reveal the position of his own artillery, and the guns appeared to be only one or two in number.

A report now came in from Blue cavalry on left flank to say that Red artillery was on CLAYCART HILL, and that the guns were covered by an escort of a company of Rifles posted near to CLAYCART BOTTOM.

At the same hour the Blue signallers on right flank, from north-east slopes of CÆSAR'S CAMP, intimated that no enemy could be seen. At 9.55 a.m. the Blue cavalry on left flank sent in a further report, to effect that the enemy seemed to be concentrating on CLAYCART HILL, in rear of the position of the guns, and that Red cavalry appeared about to form a screen from CLAYCART BOTTOM across EELMOOR PLAIN to CENTRE HILL, probably to cover the advance of other troops.

Urgent orders were sent to the Blue cavalry to break through the screen and see what was behind it, but they seemed to be unable to do so, being met by fire from CENTRE HILL when they advanced too close. At 10 a.m. it was reported that there was a further and more retired cavalry screen, extending from EELMOOR HILL WEST and beginning to stretch towards COCKED HAT WOOD; and it appeared to MAJOR A. that these hostile cavalry movements presaged an attempt being made to threaten his left rear through OUTRIDDEN WOODS. A message from his post of observation on BURNS HILL confirmed this impression, being to the effect that a party either of infantry or dismounted cavalry was established at CENTRE HILL, and behind this point, to the west of it, a chain of Red scouts could be seen stretching towards LONG HILL. The presence

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of Red artillery also on CLAYCART HILL looked as if an attack was intended on this flank.

Matters stood thus when at 10.10 a.m. the Blue force on JUBILEE HILL was surprised by rifle fire being opened upon that part of the position from SUNNY HILL. At the same time the Red guns on CLAYCART HILL came into action at 1200 yards, their target being JUBILEE HILL. MAJOR A.'s artillery officer now ran his guns up to a position just behind the crest, and brought them to bear on the Red artillery. The Blue guns were well protected by the ground, and in a few rounds obtained an advantage over the Red guns, which were rather exposed on CLAYCART HILL, and apparently few in number.

MAJOR A. now came to the conclusion that the attack from SUNNY HILL was a feint to cover the real one, which would soon be developed on his left flank, and was considering how he would dispose of his reserves to meet the real attack, when he was informed that the cavalry signallers on the right flank had just ridden in. They reported that they had been driven off their post by several Red scouts, but, not being satisfied as to what was behind, they hung about until they became aware of the true state of things, and they now reported that Red troops were moving in force round the right flank of Blue. On finding this out, they had come in as fast as they could to warn the COMMANDER.

The BLUE COMMANDER saw from this that the true attack was coming on his extreme right, and that the other movements on the part of Red were feints, as it was impossible to suppose that the latter had troops enough to attack at three separate points. He was glad he had not

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moved his reserve companies, and he now put them into favourable positions for disposing of the attackers should they succeed in getting round the flank, which he very much doubted they would be able to do.

At 10.15 a.m. the position on STEEP HILL was brought under fire from the RIDGE overlooking STEEP BOTTOM, near BROWNLOAF HILL. MAJOR A.'s troops responded, and he himself awaited developments, anticipating from the report of the signallers that the enemy would presently attempt to turn his right flank by the slopes of CÆSAR'S CAMP, an attack which he was well prepared to meet.

### *Narrative. Defending or Red Force.*

Copies of the General Idea and of the Special Idea [1] Red Force were handed to MAJOR J. at WELLINGTON AVENUE at 9 a.m. Having consulted his map and considered the Special Idea, it was evident to MAJOR J. that he must first find the enemy before he could push him back, and for that purpose the cavalry must be sent to the front, and good information obtained as to the enemy's presence. Meantime MAJOR J. would propose to occupy a temporary position beyond the ROYAL PAVILION, from which he could bring his guns to bear upon the foe if he advanced; and such a position would probably be best assumed about JUBILEE HILL. If JUBILEE HILL was occupied, some other place must be found, or the enemy could be attacked and driven back. In any case cavalry must report before precise instructions could be issued on this head.

[1] For Special Idea Red Force, see p. 2.

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MAJOR J. then wrote the following "operation orders" in the army memo-book with which he was provided, and handed them, when prepared, to the officers concerned. They were to take effect from the hour named for the movements to commence—9.30 a.m.

**March Orders; by O. Cg. Eastern Force (Red).**

No. 1. WELLINGTON AVENUE,
To Os. Cg. Units. *March* 31, 19—, 9.20 *a.m.*

1. The enemy is reported to be at or about DOGMERSFIELD.

2. My intentions are to attack him vigorously with my command as per margin, wherever I find him, to drive him back.

*One battery.*
*One squadron.*
*Two battalions.*

3. Cavalry to reconnoitre to front and flanks in direction of BOURLEY and LONG HILL. Afterwards to clear my front and support infantry advance on both flanks. A troop to be sent as temporary escort to guns.

4. Artillery will push forward with escort and take post on JUBILEE HILL, facing west. If this hill is occupied, the battery will cover advance of infantry from high ground between coppices on CLAYCART HILL.

5. Infantry will advance towards BOURLEY by road between RUSHMOOR and PAVILION HILLS, covered by advanced guard of Rifle Brigade. If enemy holds JUBILEE HILL, further orders will be sent.

6. I shall be at head of infantry on the march.

(Sd.) J.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

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The orders having been issued, the troops moved off at 9.30 a.m. as directed. Before leaving, a verbal instruction was also given to the cavalry to cover retirement of the force in case of a reverse.

MAJOR J. was under the impression that if the enemy was advancing from BOURLEY, he would probably be at an equal distance from JUBILEE HILL, and that one side would have as good a chance as the other of seizing this desirable position. It turned out that the opposing Blue force was somewhat nearer, so it came about that as the head of the main body of Red infantry was debouching from WELLINGTON AVENUE on to the FARNBOROUGH ROAD, MAJOR J. received intelligence from his cavalry to the effect that JUBILEE HILL was in possession of the enemy.

The infantry column was at once halted, and the advanced guard, which was some way ahead on the east side of the ROYAL PAVILION enclosure was recalled; the company of Rifles sent as escort to the guns being directed to follow the artillery as before ordered, but an orderly was despatched at a gallop to stop the guns on their way towards PAVILION HILL.

MAJOR J. now perceived that he must decide at once on the method of his attack upon the enemy in possession of JUBILEE HILL. When he had consulted his map before starting, he saw that in such an eventuality there were only two good modes of action possible. One was by making a flank march to work round by OUTRIDDEN COPPICES, whence an assault on the enemy's left rear could be made with advantage. The march would, however, take a long time, and in crossing the LONG VALLEY exposure was unavoidable. The attack would therefore fail to be a

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surprise, and could be easily met. The other method, and the better of the two, was to get round the enemy's extreme right, the ground being apparently favourable for such a movement, so far as could be judged from the map, and attack him on his right rear; a holding attack being made from SUNNY HILL in direction of CHEESE HILL, to deceive and hold the enemy.

The upper portion of CÆSAR'S CAMP and of HUNGRY HILL being out of bounds, there were no dominating positions in these quarters to be considered, but as it was probable the enemy would occupy the lower slopes of CÆSAR'S CAMP by his scouts, means would have to be taken by which their powers of observation would be nullified.

It did not take long for MAJOR J. to decide upon his plan, as it had all been previously thought out, and he issued the following attack orders almost immediately :—

**Attack Orders; by O. Cg. Eastern Force (Red).**

No. 2. FARNBOROUGH ROAD,
To Os. Cg. Units. *March* 31, 19—, 9.40 *a.m.*

1. Information is received from cavalry that JUBILEE HILL is in hands of the enemy.

2. I propose to attack the enemy on his extreme right flank, and to deliver a holding attack from SUNNY HILL at same time.

3. Cavalry will operate on the enemy's left flank to induce him to think a turning movement intended in that direction. The troop now with artillery will be sent to me on relief by infantry escort.

4. Infantry will keep together as far as S.E. corner of

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ROYAL PAVILION, where three companies Rifle Brigade will turn up to SUNNY HILL for holding attack. This attack will commence at 10.10 a.m. COMMANDER, CAPTAIN O.

5. The rest of Rifle Brigade and Bedford Regiment will make a flank march south of SUNNY and BROWNLOAF HILLS, and then by north slopes of CÆSAR'S CAMP towards BOURLEY HILL, to attack as may be ordered. The Rifle Brigade will send one company as escort to artillery.

6. The real attack will be supported by artillery from CLAYCART HILL.

7. The bearer company will form a dressing-station near WELLINGTON AVENUE.

8. I shall be with the flank attack.

(Sd.) J.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing, and copies sent to cavalry and artillery by cyclist messengers.

On receipt of the fresh orders, the Red infantry promptly advanced in the new direction, and the orders were also sent to the artillery, halted near RUSHMOOR HILL, to tell them of the enemy having occupied JUBILEE HILL. The guns were accordingly moved towards CLAYCART HILL, covered by the cavalry escort, which was shortly relieved by a company of Rifles. The troop thus released, under command of LIEUTENANT G., who had just received MAJOR J.'s last order, immediately rode off rapidly to catch up the main body on the FARNBOROUGH ROAD. This it did before the latter had proceeded halfway along the eastern side of the ROYAL PAVILION enclosure. MAJOR J. repeated again the plan he wished to carry out to the troop leader, and directed him to advance rapidly in reconnoitring order

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and examine all the ground about the north-east slopes of CÆSAR'S CAMP, and if the enemy had any scouts on the look-out, to drive them back. LIEUTENANT G. suggested that the main column had better not proceed beyond the south-east corner of the PAVILION enclosure until he made signal of safety. This was arranged, and the troop leader was further enjoined to be careful to give the impression of reconnaissance only being his business, and that no appearance of force should lead the enemy to think a movement was proceeding on this flank. The troop now rode off quickly to carry out the orders, and MAJOR J. halted his column on the FARNBOROUGH ROAD.

When the Red battery got to CLAYCART HILL, the COMMANDER was much puzzled to find a suitable position for the guns. The amount of open ground between the numerous coppices was very limited, and the latter grew so close to the edge of the crest, where the ground began to fall into CLAYCART BOTTOM, that there was no place where a battery could be drawn up on the higher ground. Just north-east of BAT'S HOG STY, and about 250 yards from it, there was room for two guns, which accordingly were unlimbered and placed at this spot, being about 1200 yards from JUBILEE HILL. The other four guns were brought up behind the coppices and unlimbered, the guns being then run up by hand into positions by subdivisions, spaced along the western crest of CLAYCART HILL on the edges of the coppices, and well covered from view of the enemy. The four guns were placed at respective ranges of 1300, 1400, 1450, and 1650 yards from JUBILEE HILL. All the guns thus posted could bring oblique fire to bear upon the Blue position.

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The COMMANDER of the Red battery soon made out the position of Blue infantry on JUBILEE HILL, having a good pair of Zeiss field-glasses. No hostile artillery was, however, to be seen. The infantry escort of the Red guns was pushed out about 400 yards to the right front of the battery, and was thus posted not far from the western edge of CLAYCART BOTTOM.

MAJOR J., on the FARNBOROUGH ROAD, waited for signal from his cavalry, and at 9.55 a.m. a non-commissioned officer, whom he had placed at the corner of the enclosure, notified that the sign to advance had been made by a cavalryman who was galloping back from BROWNLOAF HILL. MAJOR J.'s force now advanced, and at the corner of the enclosure the three companies of the Rifles (Nos. 2, 3, and 4 Companies) detailed by the commander of the battalion for the false attack, left the main column, and commenced to skirt the southern fence of the ROYAL GROUNDS on their way to SUNNY HILL. The main column directed its course towards CÆSAR'S CAMP.

When the three companies reached the south-west angle of the ROYAL PAVILION grounds, the SENIOR OFFICER halted the force well out of sight of JUBILEE HILL. The companies, it was arranged, were to remain here till 10 minutes past 10, so as to enable the flank attack to make good progress, and then the frontal attack was to be commenced, to distract the enemy's attention from the real movement.

Scouts were now detached to climb stealthily up the slopes of the adjoining hills, SUNNY HILL and PAVILION HILL, to observe and report on the enemy's position. It was presently reported to the COMMANDER of No. 2

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company, who was also the senior officer, that JUBILEE and STEEP HILLS were occupied by the Blue infantry, but no guns were visible. One of the scouts had, however, observed an artilleryman moving between the two hills, from which he inferred that guns were not far distant. There appeared to be an extensive gap between the bodies of infantry on the two hills, just where the BOURLEY ROAD ran from the PAVILION HILL towards the RESERVOIRS. The officer in command thought that the best line of frontal attack would be from PAVILION and SUNNY HILLS directed upon the centre of the Blue position. He conferred with the officers of the other two companies, directing one to take post behind SUNNY HILL, and the other behind PAVILION HILL; he himself would keep his company centrally placed in local reserve.

When MAJOR J.'s column had proceeded a short way on the south-east side of the RIDGE which runs from CÆSAR'S CAMP to SUNNY HILL, the troop leader who had given the signal to advance came galloping back. He informed the COMMANDER that he had found a small signalling party of Blue cavalry on WINDY GAP HILL,[1] and had driven them away in direction of BOURLEY HILL. He had also had a good view of the Blue position from WINDY GAP HILL, and gave a full description of the disposition of the troops. The Blue infantry occupied JUBILEE and STEEP HILLS, and

[1] The north-east spur of CÆSAR'S CAMP (500 feet contour), from which the RIDGE mentioned in this narrative springs, is called WINDY GAP HILL in the recently revised 6-inch Ordnance Survey Map. It must not be confounded with the old WINDY GAP HILL, still marked as such in the older maps, now called WINDY GAP only, situated at the north-east slope of HUNGRY HILL, alongside the FARNHAM-FARNBOROUGH ROAD.



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a battery was concealed on JUBILEE HILL. The ground near CÆSAR'S CAMP forbade the possibility of Major J. getting his force round unseen, as he had hoped, to the enemy's right rear. The troops would be quite exposed on passing over the upper part of the RIDGE, and when they got into STEEP BOTTOM, which lay beyond the RIDGE, there would be no possible cover for them. The force would be, however, quite concealed until they reached the east slope of WINDY GAP HILL, unless the enemy sent a look-out post to BROWNLOAF HILL.

MAJOR J. now halted his force again, and assembled the infantry leaders by preconcerted visual signal. He told them it was necessary to change his plans, as the ground would not admit of their passing round the Blue flank unseen. He would now attack from BROWNLOAF HILL, upon the enemy's right front at STEEP HILL, with four companies of Rifles, and, as previously arranged, a holding attack would be made at 10.10 a.m. by the three companies of Rifles at PAVILION and SUNNY HILLS on the enemy's centre, slightly in advance of the attack from the RIDGE. The Bedfords would proceed to the east slope of WINDY GAP HILL, and wait until the two attacks were in full progress, when the commander would push forward some of his companies on to the RIDGE and enfilade the Blue position. A strong reserve would at first be held back behind the RIDGE, until it was seen how far the advanced companies could hold their own, when under the fire of Blue infantry from the far side of STEEP BOTTOM.

As soon as all was explained, MAJOR J. ordered the further advance of the Red infantry to take place. By 10.10 a.m., the hour arranged for the holding attack to be

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delivered, the Bedfords had reached the east side of the RIDGE at WINDY GAP HILL, and the four companies of the Rifles were ready to attack over the RIDGE in the direction of BROWNLOAF HILL, two companies in front forming their own supports, and two companies in reserve.

While these movements were taking place on the left flank of the Red Force, the cavalry on the right flank had not been idle. In order to carry out the plan of MAJOR J. and induce the Blue Force to believe they were being threatened on their left, the Red cavalry COMMANDER dispersed his men first of all about CLAYCART HILL in such manner as to attract the attention of the Blue scouts, which were scattered about in various directions, and to give the appearance of troops being collected between the coppices in rear of the Red guns. A chain of scouts was then formed, which advanced across CLAYCART BOTTOM over EELMOOR PLAIN, stretching as far as CENTRE HILL, and this chain, pivoting round to its left as it advanced, drove back any Blue scouts which it came across. On the latter collecting and trying to break through the screen, a party of the Red cavalry promptly dismounted at CENTRE HILL and opened fire on the Blue scouts. As the time approached for the holding attack to be opened from SUNNY HILL, the Red cavalry had another part of the squadron over at EELMOOR HILL WEST, and began to push a similar screen of scouts in direction of COCKED HAT WOOD from that point. The party at CENTRE HILL continued to cover these movements, and to keep the Blue cavalry at a distance by fire from this central spot.

At 10.10 a.m. the chain of scouts reached COCKED HAT WOOD, just as the false attack from SUNNY HILL commenced,

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and as the guns from CLAYCART HILL opened fire on the Blue position.

MAJOR J., on the left flank, was now moving his Rifle companies in skirmishing order up to the crest of the RIDGE overlooking STEEP BOTTOM, part of the line pushing forward to BROWNLOAF HILL, which stood in advance of the RIDGE. This small eminence was occupied by the Rifles, and formed a supporting point for the rest of the attack in this quarter.

The Bedfords were waiting at the foot of WINDY GAP HILL until the order was given to advance.

### *General Narrative.*

When the BLUE COMMANDER had his eyes opened to the enemy's tactics by the report of his signallers on the right flank, he perceived at once that the cavalry movements on his left flank had been a blind. The Blue cavalry much about the same time found this out for themselves, and were able to hold their own on the left flank.

When the Red artillery opened fire on JUBILEE HILL, the two guns placed north-east of BAT'S HOG STY first received attention from their adversaries. The Blue artillery COMMANDER took these guns as his target, and speedily broke them down. The UMPIRES placed both guns out of action. The other Red guns spaced along the eastern crest of CLAYCART BOTTOM fared better. Their ranges being all different were not quickly ascertained, and they were all more or less concealed in the positions taken up for them.

On the other flank of the Red attack the Bedfords now came into action. When the Rifles about BROWNLOAF HILL

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had fully engaged the enemy's attention, the leading company of the Bedfords climbed up WINDY GAP HILL in a long extended line, which soon came under a hot fire from the enemy on the southern spur of STEEP HILL. Notwithstanding this the Bedfords pushed on, backed up by a second company, which, establishing itself under shelter of some rough ground, proceeded coolly to pour in a destructive enfilade fire at 900 yards' range upon the Blue infantry and artillery, now well in sight on JUBILEE HILL.

MAJOR J., however, now saw that he had a tougher job than he had anticipated. The Bedfords were losing men, and it was very doubtful if he could maintain his advance on the extreme flank. He thought he ought to get more help from his artillery than he had hitherto done. He accordingly wrote the following order and despatched it by cyclist messenger :—

**Attack Orders; by O. Cg. Eastern Force (Red).**

No. 3. BROWNLOAF HILL,
To O. Cg. Artillery. *March* 31, 19—, 10.15 *a.m.*

Retire your battery to the FARNBOROUGH ROAD, and come up again south of ROYAL PAVILION to a suitable spot at SUNNY HILL or PAVILION HILL; target Blue position.

(Sd.) J.,
MAJOR.

By cyclist in writing.

The frontal attack on the Blue centre had so far developed that No. 4 Company Rifle Brigade was in action on the western crests of SUNNY HILL and SKIRMISHING

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HILL, with No. 2 Company in reserve; No. 3 Company had pushed across the gap to PAVILION HILL, and was now in position also on the western edge of the hill, bringing the Blue battery and infantry on JUBILEE HILL well under fire.

By 10.25 a.m. the companies of Rifles on the RIDGE and at BROWNLOAF HILL had made their fire felt on the Blue position at STEEP HILL, and the Bedfords had got up four companies on WINDY GAP HILL, where they were inflicting serious damage on the Blue position, which they fairly enfiladed. They themselves were, however, cut up severely by the fire from STEEP HILL.

The COMMANDER of Red artillery at CLAYCART HILL was beginning to fear his remaining guns would soon be put out of action, as the Blue battery was finding the range, and seemed disposed to concentrate their fire on one gun at a time, when at 10.23 a.m. he got MAJOR J.'s order to shift his position. The four remaining guns were at once run back by hand behind the coppices and limbered up.

Five minutes later the Red guns reached the south-western angle of the ROYAL PAVILION enclosure. Here the artillery officer in command halted the guns and consulted with the officer of No. 2 Company of the Rifles stationed at that spot. This officer told him the companies might probably advance down the western slopes of SUNNY and SKIRMISHING HILLS, and in that case the fire of guns from SUNNY HILL would be rather masked, or else they would have to fire over the infantry. The artillery COMMANDER therefore determined to get a position at PAVILION HILL, on to which he accordingly rode. He found that a covered position facing west just behind

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the summit of the hill was available, but it was only about 900 yards from his target. His orders, however, did not leave him much choice, and he signalled to the battery to advance. As the guns were crossing the road between SUNNY HILL and PAVILION HILL they became completely exposed to the fire of the Blue battery on JUBILEE HILL, which was looking out for them. The result was disastrous to the Red guns, which were obliged to be put out of action by the UMPIRES.

The Blue battery, which had for some time been suffering from the enfilade rifle fire from CÆSAR'S CAMP, directed upon it by the Bedfords, now limbered up with the intention of seeking a position to bear upon the flank attack, which had by this time made considerable progress. The companies of the Rifles occupied 500 yards of the crest of the RIDGE, with their right on SKIRMISHING HILL and their left centre advanced to BROWNLOAF HILL. The Bedfords had got four companies on to WINDY GAP HILL, but had incurred heavy losses which the UMPIRES were about to take into account. The battalion had, however, four companies still in general reserve, which had not entered as yet into the fight.

At 10.40 a.m. the "Cease fire" sounded by direction of the CHIEF UMPIRE, and all troop leaders were requested to assemble on STEEP HILL.

### *Summing up.*

The GENERAL OFFICER acting as CHIEF UMPIRE, addressing the COMMANDERS, expressed his approval both of the attack and the defence, although there were errors on both sides.

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The delusive movements of the Red cavalry to deceive the enemy on his left flank were well devised and carried out. The plan of the Red infantry movements on the other flank was also good to a certain point, but it had a fatal defect, as the COMMANDER had miscalculated the amount of exposure to which his force would be subject in getting round the enemy's flank. He accordingly had to change his plan of attack at the last moment. In attempting to effect a lodgment on WINDY GAP HILL with his infantry, MAJOR J. could hardly have anticipated such a loss as occurred. Out of four companies which got there, the ASSISTANT UMPIRES told him they would have put two half-companies out of action had the "Cease fire" not been sounded.

Notwithstanding, therefore, that Red had still four companies in reserve, the CHIEF UMPIRE thought the attack would have failed, the Blue position being too strong.

The BLUE COMMANDER made a good disposition of his troops. He provided for a possible turning movement by stationing strong reserves well back. He also had an observation post on BURNS HILL, and another on CÆSAR'S CAMP. It was unfortunate that this last post was driven away at a critical moment. As events turned out, it would have been better had there been a look-out post on BROWNLOAF HILL. This would have prevented effectually the massing of troops behind the RIDGE. The Red artillery was rather unfortunately handled. The artillery officer found it hard, in the first instance, to get a position at all on CLAYCART HILL, owing to the coppices growing so thickly and so close to the higher parts of the ground as to leave little room for artillery. So far, however, four of

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the guns were not badly placed by being spaced along the eastern edge of CLAYCART BOTTOM on the upper ground. But two guns had to be posted just north of BAT'S HOG STY, and these presented a tempting target to the Blue artillery, as they were very much exposed and only 1200 yards from the Blue battery. It was a pity that MAJOR J. ordered the guns to move, as the four which remained in action were doing good service, and were bringing oblique fire to bear on JUBILEE HILL. In any case the selection of a new position should have been left to the artillery officer, who might merely have been told that support on the left flank was required from the guns. It is probable that in such case a better position would have been found than either SUNNY HILL or PAVILION HILL, both of which were too close to the Blue position; and the Red battery had hardly a chance of unlimbering without coming under a destructive fire.

### *Comments.*

It will be noticed, as an instance of the inversion which sometimes takes place in the execution of military operations, often owing to the accident of geographical conditions, that the strategical defenders in the foregoing action became the tactical assailants, and the strategical invaders assumed the *rôle* of defenders.

The limited amount of frontage taken up by the firing line in the defence at the first disposition was in consideration of the facts that—(1) the force was intended to hold on to the last to its position, which here took the form of a natural quadrilateral fortress (JUBILEE HILL, STEEP HILL, BOURLEY HILL, BURNS HILL), with CHEESE

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Hill forming a kind of low ravelin in advance of the position; and (2) the field of fire was not very extensive, especially on the right, and supports with local reserves would be largely wanted to feed the firing line, and also to meet flank attacks which might develop as time went on; the general reserve being, moreover, kept in a convenient position, well back, from which to advance and repel a flank attack or turning movement when attempted, or to give a counter-attack.

Owing to the successive changes of disposition necessary to meet the varied phases of a situation, and to counter the adversary's moves as they severally take place, it will be noticed at once how important it is, especially on the wider area over which troops have now to be spread, that rapid and unfailing means of communication which cannot be interpreted by the enemy should be arranged for in all tactical operations of the present and of the future.

The value of good field-glasses to locate hostile infantry, whose heads alone may be momentarily seen amongst the heather, or an occasional figure showing amongst scattered tufts of gorse, or to fix the position of guns as they are working up to their posts, must not be overlooked. Lastly, although the overwhelming power of the rifle-bullet in the attack and defence of a position overshadows every other mode of action, the possible fact that both attackers and defenders must be prepared to use the bayonet as a final stroke or a last resistance should never be put out of mind, and this thought was doubtless present with the troops of both sides, as they closed on one another at Windy Gap and Steep Hills in the later phases of this affair.

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## B.

# TACTICAL OPERATION AT ALDERSHOT.

(*See Maps* 1, 2.)

ADVANCED GUARD *v.* ADVANCED GUARD.

*March* 27, 19—.

THIS scheme was originally set at a Field Officers' Examination held at ALDERSHOT in March, 1899, under the General and Special Ideas here given. It has now been worked out over again with careful regard to the ground, and to the later conditions of modern warfare. Permission has been accorded to the AUTHOR, by the GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING at ALDERSHOT, to make use of the original General and Special Ideas of the scheme for purposes of publication.

### *General Idea.*

An advancing Eastern army meets a hostile advancing Western army.

### *Special Idea. Western Force (Blue).*

At 10 a.m., at which hour operations will commence, the situation is as follows:—

You are in command of the advanced guard of a division (consisting of two battalions, one battery, and one

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squadron, with a half bearer company). From reports received last night, the enemy's advanced troops have reached the FOX HILLS. At 9.30 a.m. you receive the following order :—

"ODIHAM, *March* 27, 19—, 8.30 *a.m.*

"Advance at once and seize the high ground to the east and north-east of LAFFAN'S PLAIN. The division will bivouac to-night on LAFFAN'S PLAIN, and your troops will secure this bivouac from the east.

"By order, H.H.,
"Chief of Staff."

*Special Idea. Eastern Force (Red).*

At 10 a.m., at which hour operations will commence, the situation is as follows: You are in command of the advanced guard of a division (consisting of two battalions, one battery, and one squadron, with a half bearer company). From reports received last night, the enemy's advanced troops had reached CROOKHAM.

The division, of which you are the advanced guard, marching from NORMANDY this morning, will reach LAFFAN'S PLAIN at 2 p.m., where it is intended to bivouac.

At 9.30 a.m. you receive the following order :—

"NORMANDY, *March* 27, 19—, 8.30 *a.m.*

"Advance at once and seize the ground to the west of LAFFAN'S PLAIN, covering the front and flank of the bivouac, which will face west.

"By order, M.M.
"Chief of Staff."

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Boundaries:—On the west and north, the GOVERNMENT GROUND; on the east, the line of the SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY; on the south, a line east and west joining the CLUB HOUSE with the FORESTER'S ARMS P.H. The canal is unfordable, and only EELMOOR and NORRIS bridges are available.

MAJOR W. to command Western force; MAJOR E. to command Eastern force.

Topographical Hints:—The FOX HILLS lie N.E. of ALDERSHOT, on the far side of the BASINGSTOKE CANAL. NORMANDY is about a mile E.N.E. of ALDERSHOT, near the FOX HILLS. ODIHAM is about $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles W. of ALDERSHOT. CROOKHAM is about a mile W.N.W. of ALDERSHOT. EELMOOR and NORRIS bridges cross the CANAL between the FARNHAM-FARNBOROUGH ROAD and FLEET, being about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile apart. LAFFAN'S PLAIN is just north of the CANAL, EELMOOR BRIDGE leading thereto from the south side. The FORESTER'S ARMS P.H. is one mile W. of EELMOOR BRIDGE.

### *Narrative. Western Force (Blue).*

The General Idea and also the Special Idea for Western Force were handed to MAJOR W. by an Assistant Umpire at 9.30 a.m., March 27, at the FORESTER'S ARMS P.H., which was appointed as the rendezvous for the Blue side. MAJOR W., having carefully read the instructions and also referred to his map, perceived that he was to take up the best position he could on the high ground east and north-east of LAFFAN'S PLAIN for defence, and hold on to it until relieved, to cover the proposed bivouac on the PLAIN. He must put some weight into the line of defence,

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and have reinforcements ready to feed the firing line judiciously, and, at the right moment, to keep up its strength if he should be attacked. He did not know how much he could rely on the main force at ODIHAM, for no information had been given him of any intention of supporting the advanced guard during the day time. His security must therefore depend in great measure upon making a good disposal of his troops, to withstand the weight of the enemy's force which might bear upon him.

Being a stranger to the ground, MAJOR W. had to frame his plans a good deal from what the map told him, as to extent and nature of the position to the east and north-east of LAFFAN'S PLAIN. He might meet the enemy before he could secure the position, if there was one, or the enemy might forestall him in its occupation. He had a good deal to think of, and not much time to make up his mind and write his preliminary orders. Looking round, he came to the conclusion that he was not likely to be commanded from neighbouring heights whence unexpected hostile fire might proceed. This cleared away one possible difficulty, and he therefore decided that if there was a position north and north-east of LAFFAN'S PLAIN, the sooner he occupied it the better. He had no mounted infantry to go ahead; but he had one squadron of cavalry, some of whom, dismounting, might quickly lay hands on any suitable point, and cause the enemy to lose time in the advance, not knowing what strength of force lay in front of them. Time was precious when a position had to be seized; so the COMMANDER of the Western force determined to lose none, if possible. At 9.45 a.m. he issued the following "operation orders:"—

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**Advanced-Guard Orders; by O. Cg. Western Force (Blue).**

No. 1. FORESTER'S ARMS P.H.
To Os. Cg. Units. *March* 27, 19—, 9.45 *a.m.*

1. By reports received last night, the enemy's troops had then reached the FOX HILLS.

2. Our main force intends to bivouac on LAFFAN'S PLAIN to-night, and the Advanced Guard, as per margin, will take up immediate position on the east and north-east of this ground, to prevent it falling into the enemy's hands.

*One squadron.*
*One battery.*
*Two battalions.*
*Half bearer co.*

3. The cavalry will send patrols to the east, north-east and south-east, to report on the enemy. One troop will advance rapidly to seize DANGER HILL, and half a troop will similarly hold EELMOOR BRIDGE.

4. The 1st Battalion infantry will advance on the position COVE PLATEAU—GOVERNMENT HOUSE, by the shortest and most covered route.

5. The 2nd Battalion infantry will detach one company, to NORRIS BRIDGE, one company to EELMOOR BRIDGE, and one company as escort to the guns; the remaining companies will be in reserve.

6. The battery will move to BALL HILL (*viâ* NORRIS BRIDGE), and take up a preliminary position facing east.

7. The half bearer company will advance to EELMOOR BRIDGE, and await orders.

8. I shall be with the 1st Battalion infantry.

(Sd.) W.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

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MAJOR W. also explained verbally to the O. Cg. cavalry that the detachments seizing DANGER HILL and EELMOOR BRIDGE should occupy these posts by dismounted men until relieved by infantry later on. Every effort to be made by the rest of the squadron to obtain information, and when the engagement, if there should be one, commenced, the cavalry would be expected to collect behind the flanks and be ready for any required operation or movement.

The COMMANDER of the 1st Battalion infantry was directed to post his battalion in such a way that the companies in the firing line would obtain good cover, and that the supports and local reserves would also be kept out of the enemy's fire until required to act. The COMMANDER of the 2nd Battalion infantry was requested to detail two companies as local reserves in rear of the right centre; one of these companies to occupy DANGER HILL in relief of the cavalry sent there first of all, and the other company in rear of DANGER HILL. The post occupied on the hill to be, if possible, entrenched. Three companies were also to be placed as general reserve behind the north-western slopes of COVE PLATEAU; the remaining companies of this battalion to be disposed as detailed in the orders.

It was further explained to all the commanders that in the event of opposition to the taking up position at COVE PLATEAU, the operation would be covered by artillery fire from BALL HILL.

These instructions having been given, the troops were set in motion at 10 a.m. The cavalry for DANGER HILL started off at a gallop, and reached the hill just in time to dismount and take up a concealed position on the summit,

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with horses hidden under good cover behind them, before the cavalry of the Eastern Force appeared on the sky-line of COVE PLATEAU, advancing rapidly in direction of EELMOOR FARM.

One of the cavalry patrols of the Western Force worked round by the south of the CANAL, which two of their number crossed near EELMOOR FLASH by swimming their horses over, and succeeded in getting sight of the Eastern Force on the march up LYNCHFORD ROAD, apparently about two battalions of infantry strong, the rumble of artillery or train being also heard, but no dust visible, there having been some rain. It was evident that this force was making for COVE PLATEAU and COMMON. The information was at once sent back to MAJOR W., who was well on his way to take up position on COVE COMMON, and had reached EELMOOR BRIDGE when he got the news. The Western cavalry were holding the bridge, having driven back with the fire of dismounted men a troop of the Eastern Force, which, coming along the north bank of the CANAL, had failed to arrive in sufficient time to secure passage at this point.

While MAJOR W. was considering the situation, the head of his main column of infantry came up, the 1st Battalion and three companies of the 2nd Battalion of infantry. The three companies for general reserve (Nos. 1, 2, and 3 of 2nd Battalion) had been sent round by NORRIS BRIDGE and EELMOOR FARM, a concealed route, and accompanying them were the battery of artillery, with one company as escort (No. 8); also a company (No. 7) to be left at NORRIS BRIDGE, to hold passage of the CANAL at that point.

MAJOR W., having decided upon his change of plans consequent upon finding the enemy had forestalled him in



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the position he had wanted to hold, and that there was nothing left to him to do in order to carry out his instructions but to drive the enemy back and seize the position himself, issued the following supplementary orders :—

**Attack Orders; by O. Cg. Western Force (Blue).**

No. 2. EELMOOR BRIDGE,
To Os. Cg. Units. *March* 27, 19—, 10.30 *a.m.*

1. The enemy is at COVE PLATEAU position.

2. I intend to drive him out and occupy it myself.

3. Three companies 2nd Battalion infantry now moving upon EELMOOR FARM will demonstrate against enemy's right flank in a holding attack.

4. Two companies same battalion will be sent to DANGER HILL to occupy it as a supporting point.

5. Four companies 1st Battalion infantry will deliver a decisive attack on enemy's left flank, pivotting on DANGER HILL and swinging round through GOVERNMENT HOUSE grounds. Four companies will be held as general reserve behind DANGER HILL.

6. One company 2nd Battalion infantry will hold EELMOOR BRIDGE, and one company is already at NORRIS BRIDGE.

7. The battery from BALL HILL will join in the attack on COVE PLATEAU position.

8. A dressing-station will be established near EELMOOR BRIDGE.

9. I shall remain at EELMOOR BRIDGE.

(Sd.) W.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing, copies being also sent by cyclists to NORRIS BRIDGE, EELMOOR FARM, and BALL HILL.

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The two companies (Nos. 4 and 5 of 2nd Battalion) detailed for DANGER HILL started off as soon as possible, MAJOR W. having first explained to the senior officer that one company should occupy the hill and entrench itself if time permitted, and one company be left behind the hill as local reserve. The cavalry might be either relieved or else detained at the hill if further strength was required to hold this important post. It was possible that the troops at DANGER HILL might make a feigned attack in combination with the real attack to distract the enemy, but that was a matter left to the judgment of the officer in command.

At 10.40 a.m. news from DANGER HILL reached the COMMANDER of the Western Force to effect that his dismounted cavalry at that point had already opened fire on the enemy's infantry, which appeared on COVE PLATEAU. By 10.50 a.m. the two companies reached DANGER HILL, and commenced to entrench the post on its eastern side. The dismounted cavalry remained to help to garrison the hill while the infantry were entrenching.

The 1st Battalion infantry had also advanced to a favourable position south-west of DANGER HILL for turning the left flank of the Eastern force, having been favoured and concealed by the ground in its forward movement. The three companies from EELMOOR FARM were now in evidence on the left of the intended attack, and engaging the enemy's attention.

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*Narrative. Eastern Force (Red).*

The General Idea and the Special Idea[1] Eastern Force were handed by an ASSISTANT UMPIRE to the O. Cg. RED at the rendezvous of that force, *North Camp Station, South-Eastern Railway*, on the eastern side of the line, at 9.30 a.m. on March 27, 19—.

MAJOR E. entered the waiting-room at the station and got out his maps to consider the situation.

The instructions he had received amounted to an order to occupy PYESTOCK HILL, NORRIS HILL, MILES HILL, and SPUR HILL, which lay to the front and left flank of the intended bivouac on LAFFAN'S PLAIN, facing west. PYESTOCK HILL was on the north side of the CANAL, which was not fordable, and could only be passed at NORRIS and EELMOOR BRIDGES. Time was of importance, and the shortest route to the proposed position must be taken, provided it was not too exposed. The COMMANDER perceived that he must trust to his luck to get to his ground unopposed, and must look to his cavalry not to let him run into an ambuscade, if he took advantage of concealed approaches to the intended position.

At 9.45 a.m. he issued the following "Operation Orders:"—

**Advanced Guard Orders; by O. Cg. Eastern Force (Red).**

No. 1. NORTH CAMP STATION,
To Os. Cg. Units. *March* 27, 19—, 9.45 *a.m.*

1. The enemy's troops were reported last evening to be at CROOKHAM.

[1] For Special Idea Eastern Force, see p. 28.

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2. Our main force will bivouac this afternoon on LAFFAN'S PLAIN.

3. I intend to take up and hold a position with the advanced guard as per margin, to cover the bivouac to the W. and S.W. of LAFFAN'S PLAIN.

*One squadron.*
*One battery.*
*Two battalions.*
*Half bearer co.*

4. The cavalry will reconnoitre towards N.W., W., and S.W., and report on presence and movements of enemy. One troop will advance rapidly to seize NORRIS HILL and SPUR HILL commanding the bridges over CANAL.

5. The 1st Battalion infantry will move by shortest route to defend the line PYESTOCK HILL—NORRIS HILL—SPUR HILL. The 2nd Battalion will act in reserve.

6. The artillery will take up a central position at or about MILES HILL, having an escort of one company 2nd Battalion.

7. The half bearer company will remain near the rendezvous till further orders.

8. I shall be with the guns.

(Sd.) E.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

MAJOR E., in handing these orders to the officers, took the opportunity of giving further explanations. He informed the O. Cg. cavalry that the posts to be seized should be held by dismounted men till infantry came up, and all means employed to deceive the enemy, when he approached, as to strength and intentions. As much information as possible to be obtained and sent back to the COMMANDER, and when an action commenced the cavalry

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could then fall back behind the flanks and look for fresh orders.

The COMMANDER of the 2nd Battalion infantry was requested to detail one company as escort for the battery; also three companies as local reserves in PYESTOCK WOOD, and four companies as general reserve at LAFFAN'S COPPICE, to back up the line of defence to be taken up by the 1st Battalion.

At 10 a.m. punctually the Eastern cavalry got away at a gallop. The troop for the bridges advanced by the LYNCHFORD ROAD, and then, turning south at QUEEN'S HOTEL, proceeded to the north bank of the CANAL, along which it found a sheltered line of advance by WHARF COPPICE and BERKSHIRE COPPICE to LAFFAN'S COPPICE, with intention of crossing the CANAL at EELMOOR BRIDGE. The cavalry had just started and crossed the line when the gates of the level crossing at NORTH CAMP STATION were closed, and the station master declined to allow the troops to cross until a special express train just signalled had passed. Five minutes or more were thus wasted before the column could proceed. The Eastern Force then advanced in column of fours up the LYNCHFORD ROAD towards QUEEN'S HOTEL, headed by an advanced guard with scouts well out to the front and on each flank.

On arrival at QUEEN'S HOTEL it was 10.25 a.m., and MAJOR E., who rode at the head of the advanced guard, was met by cavalry scouts, who informed him that Blue cavalry had been sighted near the RESERVOIR and to west of DANGER HILL, also that small bodies of troops were to be seen south of CANAL about MILES HILL. It was evident that the enemy was already on the ground proposed to

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be selected as a position, and it was necessary to take post at the best available place for stopping his further progress.

MAJOR E. at once gave verbal orders to the infantry to take up and hold the line of the FARNBOROUGH-FARNHAM road, facing west from GOVERNMENT HOUSE to FARNBOROUGH COMMON. At the same time he dismounted and wrote the following further orders to change his previous dispositions:—

**Defence Orders; by O. Cg. Eastern Force (Red).**

No. 2. QUEEN'S HOTEL,
To Os. Cg. Units. *March* 27, 19—, 10.25 *a.m.*

1. The enemy is reported to be in our front.

2. I intend to check him at the COVE PLATEAU position.

3. The 1st Battalion infantry will occupy the western edge of COVE PLATEAU, and extend on the right to FARNBOROUGH COMMON, forming its own local reserves. One company will also be sent to GOVERNMENT HOUSE grounds to watch the left flank.

4. The 2nd Battalion infantry, less one company for escort to artillery, will be placed behind the QUEEN'S HOTEL CROSS-ROADS, as a general reserve, to await developments.

5. The battery will take post on COVE PLATEAU.

6. A dressing-station will be fixed near NORTH CAMP STATION.

7. I shall be with the guns.

(Sd.) E.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing, and copy to bearer company by mounted orderly.

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At 10.30 a.m. MAJOR E. received cavalry reports which showed that EELMOOR BRIDGE and also NORRIS BRIDGE were in the enemy's hands. A considerable force of infantry was seen crossing or about to cross the CANAL at EELMOOR BRIDGE. Blue cavalry was about DANGER HILL, and the Red scouts could not approach this point. Infantry had been observed also nearing the western slopes of BALL HILL. A later despatch informed the Commander that the cavalry sent to occupy NORRIS HILL had made its way up through PYESTOCK WOOD on the north bank, but found the bridge in question occupied by Blue cavalry. The Red cavalry had great difficulty in getting back, and had to disperse on LAFFAN'S PLAIN and come in singly.

At 10.35 a.m. some of the 1st Battalion infantry, moving on to COVE PLATEAU, came under fire of enemy from DANGER HILL. It was believed to be only the fire of dismounted cavalry, however, and this was confirmed by the reports of Red scouts who had seen Blue cavalry in possession of the hill. The 1st Battalion commander took up about 800 yards as a line of defence, and detailed Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4 Cos. to occupy it, forming their own supports; each company had therefore a frontage of about 200 yards. Nos. 5, 6, and 7 Cos. were stationed as local reserves in a depression of ground or shallow valley on the PLATEAU in rear of the right front of the position, about 200 yards from the FARNBOROUGH ROAD. No. 8 Company was posted in GOVERNMENT HOUSE grounds.

By 10.45 a.m. the Eastern infantry was in defensive position as ordered. A minute or two before this time fire of artillery from direction of BALL HILL was opened upon COVE PLATEAU, thus revealing the presence of Blue guns.

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The Red artillery promptly replied, but did not seem to be able to fix the hostile battery, which was admirably posted. Rifle fire from EELMOOR FARM at effective range, probably about 1000 yards, now began to be felt by the defenders on COVE PLATEAU.

*General Narrative.*

At 10.50 a.m. the engagement became general. The company of 1st Battalion infantry in GOVERNMENT HOUSE grounds found itself engaged with the troops holding DANGER HILL, who were no longer dismounted cavalry, but infantry, as could plainly be perceived. The attack from EELMOOR FARM by Blue infantry progressed, and the assailants were soon only 800 yards from the Red position, lying down under cover, but keeping up a very hot fire. No reserves had been as yet ordered up by the Eastern force, MAJOR E. being doubtful as to which of the two attacks, that from EELMOOR FARM, or the closer one from DANGER HILL, was intended to be pushed home.

At this juncture, however, the 1st Battalion of the Western Force rapidly extending two companies of its right half battalion along the western border of the GOVERNMENT HOUSE grounds, to which it had advanced under cover of DANGER HILL, entered the enclosure with this force, and, swinging round the right flank, pushed through the trees until the companies encountered the smaller force of Red troops which were already engaged with DANGER HILL. Driving the Red company before it, the Blue companies, backed up by the two other companies of the right half battalion following in reserve, opened a terrific fire upon the left flank of the Red position.

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MAJOR E. ordered up the right half battalion of four companies from the general reserve of the Red Force at QUEEN'S HOTEL, but they were not up in time to save the flank being turned. At the same time an advance took place of the infantry of the western force from EELMOOR FARM to within 500 yards of the position. The battery on BALL HILL also, having partially silenced the Red battery, owing to the latter being in rather an exposed position, while the former was well covered by the ground, now opened an intensified fire on the infantry of the eastern force holding COVE PLATEAU.

At 11.15 a.m. matters approached a climax, and the "Cease fire" sounded by order of the UMPIRE-IN-CHIEF.

## *Summing up.*

The officers, being assembled on COVE PLATEAU, the CHIEF UMPIRE questioned the ASSISTANT UMPIRES and the COMMANDERS of both sides upon what had happened. The Western Force COMMANDER said that he would have liked some more detailed information from his cavalry as to the strength and dispositions of the enemy. He would also have wished to have known the rendezvous of his opponent, and time at which the latter was to be permitted to start; as this would have enabled him to judge whether he would have to attack a position or to defend one, and would have saved his having to change all his plans at a moment's notice. He had not been on the ground for twenty years, and at that distant date did not take particular notice of its characteristics, so that he had to go a good deal by his map on the present occasion.

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The Eastern Force COMMANDER complained that his cavalry did not tell him in good time that DANGER HILL was already occupied; their information was very vague, and by the time he got it the whole situation might have changed. At the same time he thought the patrol which penetrated PYESTOCK WOOD to examine NORRIS BRIDGE had done very well, as it was a difficult task to get through and also to get back. The Eastern infantry took a long time deploying from the QUEEN'S HOTEL, and he thought it also bad luck that the Eastern troops should have been detained five minutes at the start at the RAILWAY STATION on account of closing of the gates. The net result was that his infantry came under fire from DANGER HILL before they had got rightly into their position, which was very disconcerting, to say the least of it.

The CHIEF UMPIRE said there had been some sins of omission and also some of commission on both sides. He thought the Eastern Force COMMANDER had erred in not at once attempting to dislodge the defenders of DANGER HILL, holding too much to cover at GOVERNMENT HOUSE grounds, and thus allowing the post of DANGER HILL to be reinforced, which had an important bearing on the fortunes of the day. The Eastern COMMANDER might reasonably have anticipated a flank attack through the wooded enclosure on his left flank, and he ought to have diagnosed the demonstration from EELMOOR FARM as either a feint or a holding attack. His cavalry, however, should have assisted him more with further information, both as to DANGER HILL and as to EELMOOR FARM.

The original orders on each side to occupy positions covering LAFFAN'S PLAIN were fairly correct, together with

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the projects of seizing important points by cavalry, to be afterwards relieved by infantry.

As regards the Western Force's change of plans, it was well adapted to meet the new conditions, but there was a tendency on the part of the COMMANDER to have eyes in his heels as well as in his head. Would it not have been better to have moved up the two companies he had in rear guarding the EELMOOR and NORRIS bridges to aid in the attack, when the additional weight of another two companies at the decisive moment might have turned the scale, rather than to keep them back in preparation for a possible retreat? Good use had been made of cover on the whole, but owing to the inherent weakness of the Eastern Force position on its left flank, and the failure to occupy DANGER HILL, the balance of the scales rested with the Western Force, who would probably have dislodged the defenders.

## *Comments.*

This problem seems to confirm the adage, that in tactics "circumstances, time, luck, and events determine results." On this occasion, whether the Western Force would have to assume the *rôle* of attackers or defenders depended on the distance apart of the forces at the start, the relative distances of the intervening positions between the forces, the time and place at which contact would come off, and the local peculiarities of the positions which had to be taken up or attacked.

The fact of the Eastern Force being detained a short time at the railway was a matter of luck; the same might

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have easily happened in other ways, such as coming across a disabled wagon in a rocky defile, a bridge being washed away, or some other untoward accident. Five minutes may make much difference in seizing the key to a position, and the loss of five minutes may mean on occasions the loss of many men. A few minutes more or less make the difference, perhaps, of having to attack or to defend a position, and events will probably compel action one way or the other, although the wish of every commander is to be most favourably placed as regards positions, and to be able to accept or to decline battle at his own free will.

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# C.

## TACTICAL OPERATION AT ALDERSHOT.

(*See Maps* 1, 2.)

REAR GUARD *v.* ADVANCED GUARD.

*May* 23, 19—.

This scheme was originally set at a Field Officers' Examination held at ALDERSHOT a few years ago, under the General and Special Ideas here given. The operations as actually carried out were of a rather old-fashioned type, but the conditions of the scheme were good, and it has been quite worth revision and modernizing so far as the movements of the troops are concerned. As it now stands, it is hoped it may be considered a fairly typical illustration of an advanced and rear-guard action on the well-known LONG VALLEY ground. Permission has been accorded to the AUTHOR, by the GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING at ALDERSHOT, to make use of the General and Special Ideas of this scheme for purposes of publication.

### *General Idea.*

The Rear Guard of a Western Force (Red) falling back upon BASINGSTOKE is pressed by the Advanced Guard of an Eastern Force (Blue).

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*Special Idea. Western Force (Red).*

At 9 a.m. on 23rd May the O. Cg. Rear Guard (one battalion Rifles, one battalion Fusiliers, one squadron, one field battery, with a half bearer company), falling back across the LONG VALLEY, receives the following idea :—

"From O. Cg. Western Force, ODIHAM. ODIHAM,
To O. Cg. Rear Guard. *May* 23, 19—, 8.30 *a.m.*

"Hold the ridges and woods west of LONG VALLEY at ALDERSHOT as long as possible consistent with safety."

"By order, A.,
"A. A. GENERAL."

On receipt of this order instructions are given for the Rear Guard to halt, the Main Guard being at TWESELDOWN HILL, the Support at LONG HILL, and the remainder or Rear Party between LONG HILL and CLAYCART BOTTOM.

*Special Idea. Eastern Force (Blue).*

The Advanced Guard (one battalion Infantry, one battalion Light Infantry, one squadron, and one field battery, with a half bearer company), at 9.30 a.m., May 23, 19—, halts at the open ground west of FARNHAM-FARNBOROUGH ROAD, south of CLUB HOUSE enclosure. The O. Cg. Advanced Guard has received instructions to press pursuit to the west across the open country.

Boundaries :—On the north the south bank of the BASINGSTOKE CANAL, on the south GOVERNMENT GROUND. No troops of the Red Force to be east of CLAYCART BOTTOM, and no troops of the Blue Force to be west of RUSHMOOR

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Bottom, before 10 a.m. Major B. to command the Western Force, Major F. the Eastern Force.

Topographical Hints:—Long Hill is just W. of Long Valley; Tweseldown Hill is just W. of Long Hill; the North Horns P.H. is ¾ mile W. of Long Hill; Odiham is 6 miles W., Basingstoke 12 miles W., of Long Hill.

*Narrative. Western or Red Force.*

The General Idea and Special Idea for Western Force were handed to Major B. at Long Hill at 9.30 a.m.

Having consulted his map, he determined to occupy the line facing east, extending from Outridden Firs to Cocked Hat Wood, and including Long Hill. This being a naturally strong position, having a commanding hill in the centre, and the flanks secured by woods which ought to be capable of stout resistance to an assailant, Major B. expected to be able to hold out against hostile attack for a considerable period. The troops already east of Long Hill, being the rear party, consisting of a company of infantry together with the squadron of cavalry, would remain out to contest the first advance of the enemy; the cavalry getting into contact with the pursuers as soon as possible, and keeping in touch with them. When finally pushed back, the squadron would clear the front of the position, and act in defence of the flanks, looking out also for turning movements on part of the enemy.

Major B. now issued "operation orders" in pursuance of these plans.

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**Defence Orders; by O. Cg. Rear Guard (Red).**

No. 1. LONG HILL,
To Os. Cg. Units. *May* 23, 19—, 9.40 *a.m.*

1. The enemy is pressing us in pursuit.

2. I intend to take position at LONG HILL, with the Rear Guard as per margin, to delay the enemy's advance.

*One squadron.*
*One battery.*
*Two battalions.*

3. The cavalry will obtain information of the enemy's position, strength, and movements, and send it back to LONG HILL.

4. The battery will take post in a concealed central position facing E. on LONG HILL, and bring the enemy under fire when he offers a good target in the LONG VALLEY.

5. The company of Rifles of rear party now at CENTRE HILL will delay enemy's advanced troops by a show of strength, and, when forced to retire, will fall back on left of position.

6. Remainder of Rifle battalion will occupy OUTRIDDEN FIRS and OUTRIDDEN COPPICE, also OUTRIDDEN HILL, having local reserves behind CHESTNUT COPPICE.

7. The Fusilier battalion will hold the rest of the position, including COCKED HAT WOOD, having local reserves west of LONG HILL. This battalion will furnish four companies for a general reserve to be posted on the RACE COURSE.

8. A dressing-station will be fixed near the NORTH HORNS P.H.

9. I shall be with the artillery.

(Sd.) B.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.



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Various explanations of details were given to the commanders of infantry, more especially as regards the reserves, in handing over the orders. The company in advance was directed not to fall back on COCKED HAT WOOD in one body, but by driblets of two or three men at a time. The artillery commander was also requested to unlimber well behind the eastern crest of the hill, and to run his guns up by hand into position.

At 10 a.m. the cavalry went out to the extreme front, and the infantry and guns were in position; the Fusiliers and a portion of the Rifles, as well as the artillery, being at TWESELDOWN HILL with the main guard, they had to retrace their steps to LONG HILL, but were all in their intended places by the hour named.

The commander of the Rifle battalion detailed No. 4 Company for OUTRIDDEN FIRS, No. 5 Company for OUTRIDDEN COPPICE, and Nos. 6 and 7 Companies for OUTRIDDEN HILL. He also placed Nos. 1, 2, and 3 Companies as local reserves behind CHESTNUT COPPICE. No. 8 Company was at CENTRE HILL.

The battery being placed at the southern part of LONG HILL, the commander of the Fusilier battalion detailed Nos. 2 and 3 Companies to hold the hill from the artillery position to COCKED HAT WOOD, No. 1 Company to occupy COCKED HAT WOOD, and No. 4 Company to act as local reserve on the west side of LONG HILL. Nos. 5, 6, 7, and 8 Companies formed a general reserve on the RACE COURSE.

In a very few minutes' time after the cavalry crossed CLAYCART BOTTOM, orderlies were observed galloping back across the LONG VALLEY. They brought news to effect that a force of the three arms of the Blue side was near the

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CLUB HOUSE; the Blue cavalry were in RUSHMOOR BOTTOM, and rendered it difficult to carry out reconnaissance. A Red scout or two, however, got away to the flank through the coppices in the direction of ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, and, working round, were able to see and report upon the hostile force. It appeared to be of about the same strength as the Red Force.

Further reports from the cavalry showed that the Blue troops were advancing over CLAYCART HILL, the Red cavalry having to fall back. The leading Blue infantry reached CLAYCART BOTTOM at 10.20 a.m., and presently showed themselves breasting the slope which led to CENTRE HILL. The Red Rifle company at this post opened fire, and the Blue infantry advance was immediately checked. A little later the Red cavalry reported that the main force of Blue infantry and guns was not following up their advanced infantry. MAJOR B., suspecting a flanking movement to be projected, sent pressing orders to his cavalry on both flanks to report the direction of the enemy's further advance.

At about 10.30 a.m. the company at CENTRE HILL was engaged with a strong force of hostile infantry advancing from CLAYCART BOTTOM, but, being strongly posted with the ground in its favour, the company was able to hold on; the Blue assailants, although extended at broad intervals, having to delay their advance, and take better cover to avoid heavy loss.

At 10.40 a.m. MAJOR B. was informed that Blue artillery was somewhere near the ROYAL PAVILION, and ten minutes later artillery fire was opened upon LONG HILL by Blue guns, from a concealed position at or about PAVILION HILL, apparently as preparatory fire to cover an advance. At

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the same time the Red Rifle company at CENTRE HILL was so vigorously attacked by an enveloping force of Blue infantry, that it had to fall back upon COCKED HAT WOOD. The Blue infantry held on to the hill with tenacity, but kept well on its eastern side, so that they did not come under the fire of the position at LONG HILL, although only about 800 yards away. During this last contest on the eastern slope of CENTRE HILL, the guns from PAVILION HILL supported the Blue assailants.

The Red battery at LONG HILL was some time before it could locate the Blue battery and return its fire. PAVILION HILL, on which the hostile guns were reported to be placed, was hidden from view by the intervening lower slopes of JUBILEE HILL, which stood at about the same level as the crest of LONG HILL. The general direction of PAVILION HILL could be traced, as the tops of the trees in the ROYAL GROUNDS, which the map showed to be immediately east of the hill, were just visible from LONG HILL. The battery commander sent out a man with a small flag to the western slopes of JUBILEE HILL to fix an aiming point. This he succeeded in doing near the skyline of the intervening hill, and the Red battery, guided by the flag, was consequently soon able to shell the Blue guns. In this interchange of fire neither battery did the other much harm, as they were both firing across the intermediate slopes of JUBILEE HILL, which completely hid the guns from sight on either side.

Shortly before 11 o'clock MAJOR B. received sudden news, both from his cavalry scouts and from the right of his position, that the enemy had succeeded in getting a strong force of infantry as far as WINDY GAP HILL, on the upper

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part of the RIDGE extending from CÆSAR'S CAMP to SUNNY HILL, and that the main attack might be expected on the right flank of the Red position. He ordered a portion of the general reserve at the RACE COURSE to reinforce the right, and directed the Rifle companies to look out for attack, and to make a stubborn resistance. At 11.5 a.m. it was reported that the assailants had reached STEEP HILL, and shortly after this OUTRIDDEN FIRS was attacked on two sides by the Blue infantry, and at the same time became the target of the hostile battery at PAVILION HILL.

*Narrative. Eastern or Blue Force.*

The General Idea and also the Special Idea [1] for the Blue Force were handed to MAJOR F. at the CLUB HOUSE at 9.30 a.m. MAJOR F. perceived that to carry out his instructions he would require special information about the enemy's position and strength. He therefore determined to send his cavalry as soon as possible to the front and flanks to report on these matters. Meantime he would move forward as an advanced guard working in open country, keeping his artillery back until the direction in which the enemy was to be found should be disclosed.

He accordingly wrote and issued the following "operation orders:"—

**Advanced Guard Orders; by O. Cg. Eastern force (Blue.)**

No. 1. NEAR CLUB HOUSE,
To Os. Cg. Units. *May* 23, 19—, 9.40 *a.m.*

1. The enemy's rear guard is in retreat to the W. I intend to follow it up with my command, as per margin, and attack it when found.

*One squadron.*
*One battery.*
*Two battalions.*
*Half bearer co.*

[1] For Special Idea Eastern Force, see p. 47.

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2. The cavalry will proceed rapidly to the front in direction of LONG HILL, and also to the right and left fronts, to find the enemy, and let me know his position, also his strength, if possible, but to waste no time.

3. The remainder of force under my command will move forward in advanced-guard order, extending over a broad front. The support to advanced party (4 companies Light Infantry battalion) will lead the infantry, followed at 400 yards' distance by the main guard (4 companies Light Infantry and the Infantry battalion), with the artillery in a central position.

4. A dressing-station will be established at the CLUB HOUSE.

5. I shall be with the main guard near the artillery.

(Sd.) F.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

At 10 a.m. the cavalry crossed RUSHMOOR BOTTOM, and also sent two strong patrols towards the flanks to carry out the wishes of the COMMANDER. The advance across CLAYCART HILL was stopped by Red cavalry scouting in force from CLAYCART BOTTOM, but the right Blue patrol rode rapidly down RUSHMOOR BOTTOM towards the CANAL, and got round the flank of the Red scouts, while the left patrol made for the ROYAL PAVILION, and also slipped beyond the right flank of the Red cavalry. The cavalry commander on the Blue side, seeing his men stopped so soon in front, sent another section to his left flank towards the ROYAL PAVILION, to endeavour to discover the enemy's position by getting on his flank. He himself galloped off

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to PAVILION HILL, thinking this was the best direction for obtaining news. Some of his scouts came back to him before long to say the enemy was occupying OUTRIDDEN FIRS. This information was sent to MAJOR F., and reached him at 10.20 a.m. By this time the forward movement of the advanced guard was stopped by hostile infantry in position at CENTRE HILL, which was in the direct road and barred the way to LONG HILL. The main guard and guns were under cover in CLAYCART BOTTOM, while the four advanced companies of the Light Infantry battalion exchanged a few rounds at 600 yards with the Red infantry at CENTRE HILL, but fell back again to CLAYCART BOTTOM, under orders from the COMMANDER specially transmitted to them.

MAJOR F. next received news from his right cavalry patrol to the effect that COCKED HAT WOOD was certainly occupied by infantry. LONG HILL also had infantry lying behind it; more were believed to be still further west, and artillery was concealed somewhere about the centre of LONG HILL.

MAJOR F. now saw that the enemy's position extended from OUTRIDDEN FIRS to COCKED HAT WOOD. He accordingly, on rejoining the main guard in CLAYCART BOTTOM, issued the following further orders:—

**Attack Orders; by O. Cg. Eastern Force (Blue).**

No. 2. CLAYCART BOTTOM,
To Os. Cg. Units. *May* 23, 19—, 10.24 *a.m.*

1. The enemy is reported to be in position at OUTRIDDEN COPPICES—LONG HILL—COCKED HAT WOOD; artillery central, infantry right and left of guns.

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2. I propose to attack the position on its left front and on its right flank, the latter attack to be pushed home, under cover of the broken ground about BOURLEY HILL; the assault on the enemy's left to be made at first with a view of tying the enemy down in front by a holding attack.

3. The guns will proceed with an escort of one company Infantry battalion to PAVILION HILL, where they will come into action; target, LONG HILL.

4. The attack on left front of position will be made by the four companies Light Infantry battalion lately in advance. They must not go beyond CENTRE HILL without further orders. They can entrench themselves there if thought fit, for which purpose they have implements, and then act according to circumstances.

5. The attack on the enemy's right flank will be made by four companies Light Infantry battalion and the Infantry battalion, less one company. These troops will proceed by the most covered route to the eastern slopes of WINDY GAP HILL. They will then cross the RIDGE and STEEP BOTTOM, advancing towards BOURLEY HILL to turn and attack the enemy's flank.

6. The dressing-station will be moved to ALL SAINTS CHURCH.

7. I shall be with the guns at PAVILION HILL.

(Sd.) F.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

The guns with infantry escort for PAVILION HILL and the infantry of the left attack moved off promptly at 10.25 a.m., by direction of the COMMANDER while the

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orders were being written. The left attack consisted of Nos. 5, 6, 7, and 8 Companies of the Light Infantry, and the Infantry battalion less No. 1 Company escort for guns.

When the orders were given out, MAJOR F. directed the remaining four Light Infantry companies (Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4) to advance again carefully towards CENTRE HILL, and occupy the enemy's attention with a holding attack. He enjoined upon the leaders of these companies to spin out the attack so as to allow time for the infantry of the real attack to get round the enemy's flank, which he estimated would take rather more than half an hour. The guns from PAVILION HILL would open fire on LONG HILL in about twenty minutes, and on their doing so the Light Infantry should press their attack and dislodge the enemy from CENTRE HILL. Should this be successfully accomplished, the Blue companies might lie down behind the western crest and endeavour to throw up some earth cover in their immediate front, to give the firing line protection from the enemy's bullets. For this purpose MAJOR F. suggested that each squad of the leading companies established in position should make a small entrenchment, the tools taken with the companies being distributed for that purpose. The men not working would lie down between the squads, and keep down the fire of the enemy until the squad entrenchments were ready for all to occupy them. Thus a line of entrenched squads would be formed at about 700 or 800 yards from LONG HILL and COCKED HAT WOOD.

The companies for the holding attack having moved off, MAJOR F. followed the artillery to PAVILION HILL, the battery arriving there at 10.40 a.m.

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The battery commander, on reaching PAVILION HILL, was rather disconcerted by finding that the northern slopes of JUBILEE HILL, stretching out in direction of CENTRE HILL, extended across his front and prevented sight of his target on LONG HILL. He proceeded, however, by laying his map on the ground and taking a ray to LONG HILL, to mark an object on JUBILEE HILL which came nearly into the line. This was a young fir tree growing singly on the near side of the skyline. The commander now sent forward a N.C.O. with a small flag, who proceeded in direction of the fir tree, and crept up the near slope of JUBILEE HILL, which was about half a mile away. On sighting LONG HILL, the N.C.O. placed himself in the required line of fire, keeping just behind the brow of the hill, and fixed the flag as an aiming-point below the crest-line. The flag was about 15 yards to the north of the fir tree, and marked the direction of the extreme left of the target on LONG HILL. The battery commander now took the range of LONG HILL from the map—it was about a mile off—and was able to open fire. For some little time there was no reply, but after an interval the Red battery slowly replied. In the exchange of fire the Blue battery, having ranged earlier than its opponent, had somewhat the advantage, but each battery was completely hidden from view of the other battery, so that the effect of the fire could not be directly noted.

The action at CENTRE HILL now became the attraction to spectators on both sides. The Light Infantry companies pushed forward in a long enveloping line, two companies in front and two companies in a second line of skirmishers, each line rising and rushing a short distance, then lying

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down, and the front line reopening fire whenever possible, until they approached to within 300 yards of CENTRE HILL. The Red infantry, which did not appear to be more than a company in strength, notwithstanding that they were acting on the defensive, and had far better cover than their opponents, were now compelled to fall back. They could derive no help from the troops behind them, who could not fire until the Red company retired, and they would inevitably have been charged by the bayonet had they stayed much longer.

MAJOR F. saw that his troops had possession of CENTRE HILL by 10.50 a.m., and that his instructions as to throwing up cover were being carried out.

His cavalry had now given him constant information as to the progress of the left attack, and he could also, from his position on PAVILION HILL, see most of the ground passed over as yet in the advance of his troops. At 10.54 a preconcerted signal from WINDY GAP HILL on the south-east slope of CÆSAR'S CAMP informed him that the troops in that quarter were crossing the upper part of the RIDGE, and were now therefore visible to the enemy. Up to this point they had been well sheltered by the RIDGE, which extended from CÆSAR'S CAMP to SUNNY HILL.

When the four companies of the Light Infantry battalion which were in front, preceded by scouts front and flanks, got near WINDY GAP HILL they came to a halt. The two companies, Nos. 5 and 6, in advance opened out into a suitable skirmishing formation, forming their own supports, and proceeded to climb the eastern slopes of the RIDGE. They were followed by a second line of skirmishers similarly formed by Nos. 7 and 8 companies at a distance

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of 100 yards. The two lines in succession crossed the RIDGE and also STEEP BOTTOM, the leading line arriving at STEEP HILL at 11.5 a.m. The companies of the Infantry battalion followed in similar formation, the three leading companies, however, Nos. 2, 3, and 4, being detached towards BURNS HILL to make an attack on the front or east side of OUTRIDDEN FIRS. The Light Infantry companies continued to advance to BOURLEY HILL, on nearing which they swung round to attack the southern border of OUTRIDDEN FIRS, backed up by the remaining half battalion of the Infantry, Nos. 5, 6, 7, and 8 Companies.

At 10 minutes after 11 MAJOR F. directed the battery at PAVILION HILL to take as a target the eastern side of OUTRIDDEN FIRS. The tops of the trees could just be seen from PAVILION HILL, which enabled fire to be directed upon the wood without any difficulty.

### *General Narrative.*

The rear-guard position was now fairly well attacked. It had a strong force hammering at its right flank and right front, and a small one—which was, however, entrenched, and could therefore not be easily driven back—opposed to its left front.

As regards the artillery, the guns of the advanced guard at PAVILION HILL were in a first-rate position for supporting the attack upon either of the two infantry bodies, while the guns of the rear guard could not be brought to bear against the main infantry attack directed against the borders of OUTRIDDEN FIRS and COPPICE. Hence the rear-guard guns could only endeavour to keep down the fire of the opposing artillery, or else be directed

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upon the entrenched infantry at CENTRE HILL. The commander of the Red battery did not meet with much encouragement to fire upon these last, for when he did so they returned such a stinging rifle fire upon his partly exposed gunners, that he decided to leave them alone, and to confine himself to silencing, if possible, the opposing battery on PAVILION HILL.

At 11.15 a.m. OUTRIDDEN FIRS was carried by the advanced guard infantry. The fight in these woods now became more equal, the rear guard having lost the advantages of the defence; the Blue assailants seeing their enemy, and retaliating vigorously, knowing instinctively that to retire would be more dangerous than to advance. MAJOR B. at this juncture, leaving his left to look out for itself, brought up all the remainder of his general reserve to the assistance of the Rifles.

At 11.30 a.m. the "Cease fire" was sounded, when it was found that the Rifle battalion had been completely cleared out of OUTRIDDEN FIRS and OUTRIDDEN COPPICE, and that the assailants had several companies in CHESTNUT COPPICE. The rear guard battery was drawn up facing the north end of the first two woods, the guns having been shifted by hand, but the Umpires decided that they could not have come into action for more than a few rounds, owing to the close vicinity of the advanced guard rifles.

### *Summing up.*

The COMMANDERS, UMPIRES, and other officers concerned having assembled on LONG HILL, the GENERAL OFFICER made some brief comments on the situation, after hearing what the COMMANDERS and the UMPIRES had to say.

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He thought the rear guard would have had to fall back, as its line of retreat was otherwise in danger. The position taken up by the Red force was apparently a strong one, but woods on the flanks theoretically defensible were always in practice more or less a source of weakness. Red's cavalry was much to blame in not having sooner given notice of the flank march, and Blue's cavalry deserved praise for having kept away the opposing scouts with so much success. He was especially glad to see that hasty earth-cover was employed at CENTRE HILL. In future wars the spade must be used in close connection with the rifle, not only in the defence, but also in the attack of positions.

As regards the artillery, it was no doubt by an inadvertence that the Blue battery was placed in a position from which its intended target was not visible, but the result on the whole was satisfactory. The position suited the Blue COMMANDER'S plan of attack, which was well conceived and well carried out, every advantage being taken of natural cover in bringing up troops to decisive ranges. Both battery commanders took the best steps possible for ranging upon an invisible opponent by means of fixing aiming-points.

The orders on each side were comprehensive and fairly good, but the "attack orders" issued by the advanced guard COMMANDER were unduly long. Some of the details included therein should have been omitted and verbally explained to the officers concerned.

On the whole the men of each side had worked as if thinking of what would benefit their undertaking, and generally entered into the spirit of the game. Subordinate

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commanders had grasped the ideas of their chiefs and furthered their plans.

*Comments.*

This study shows plainly the great uncertainty which attends the result of tactical operations with fairly equal commanders and forces. It seldom happens that ground suitable in all respects for the development of a plan becomes available, and we find the Red COMMANDER trying to make the best of the position presented to him under his instructions. The disadvantages are manifold. Woods on flanks too extended for his force, which consists of one squadron only of mobile troops, the rest being slow-moving infantry, and an advanced line, JUBILEE and STEEP HILLS, in front of his right, to occupy which would put him in fresh difficulties if it was necessary to reinforce the troops which held it. These hills give extensive views of the open country to their north, but on their east and south-east the RIDGE which extends from CÆSAR'S CAMP to SUNNY and PAVILION HILLS restricts observation to a great extent. The ground on this side contains approaches capable of concealing a crafty enemy in the preliminary stage of the advance, just at the time when the defenders would like to have him more or less in the open, to demoralize the attacker by the fear of having to pass through a zone effectively swept by a leisurely directed fire, before the nearer position can be reached.

The Red COMMANDER has only to cast his eye to the right, and he sees the northern slopes of the commanding height of CÆSAR'S CAMP (which come within the scope of the operations) frowning down on his lines and dominating

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his position, which looked at first so strong, but now so weak; for all he knows, hostile guns may presently shift in that direction. He longs for mounted infantry, for then he might occupy an advanced position on the RIDGE, and watch the dangerous ground to its flank. As it is, he hesitates to take up a more forward position on his right, for if his left were turned he would never get away his slow-marching troops from the right, and his retreat upon BASINGSTOKE might easily be cut off.

His left does not offer the same disadvantages of position as the right, for although it rests on a small wood, the wood is on the northern slope of an open hill, and the ground to the north is clear, and, with the exception of a few scattered coppices, offers but little concealment to an approaching enemy.

All these considerations should have pointed out to the Red COMMANDER that the attack would be on his right flank. He appears, however, to have been equally apprehensive of his left flank being turned if not attacked, and so waited too long for news from his cavalry, which failed to come in time.

On the general question as to woods (alluded to in the GENERAL'S remarks), the French position at WOERTH was undoubtedly lost by the German attack through the NIEDERWALD, and there are many other instances in the war of that period when woods on the flanks were a cause of weakness. In SOUTH AFRICA, for obvious reasons, the country has not afforded much wood fighting, and no notable instance has been recorded. It is still, therefore, a matter of conjecture as to whether the edge of a wood, without an entrenchment, will give sufficient cover to

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the holders to enable them to reap the advantages of the defence, now rightly claimed when the garrison is armed with a quick-loading rifle, and is well concealed and protected against the enemy's fire. It is probable that the trees alone would not afford great safety to the defenders, and that the assailants' bullets would penetrate freely between them.

Once the edge of the wood is lost, individual fighters on either side are, as formerly, on an equality, and numerical superiority will prevail. Hence we are led to the conclusion that a wood on a flank, the approaches to which are to a certain extent covered or concealed, presents now, as in former days, a point of extreme weakness and danger to the defenders of a position, even if the attack is directed uphill and the ground be difficult of passage.

The only other matter to specially note in this study is the great importance of early, accurate, and ample information as to the movements of the enemy, and this is now more than ever of moment in an extended position taken up by infantry, for if his cavalry fails him, and the COMMANDER gets false information or no information at all, he may easily make a false move which cannot be rectified in time to avert disaster, as his troops do not possess sufficient mobility to meet a sudden change of plan. It may also be said that it is not always easy to transmit fresh orders to troop leaders separated over an extensive front, without chance of misconception by some one, after a definite line of action has been once embarked upon and the combat has begun.



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# D.

## TACTICAL OPERATION AT ALDERSHOT.

(*See Maps* 1, 2.)

ATTACK AND DEFENCE OF A CONVOY.

*October* 5, 19—.

THIS scheme was set at a Field Officers' Examination held at ALDERSHOT on October 5, 1894. The problem has now been worked out freshly on the ground, and such alterations made in what originally took place as seem necessary to bring the movements up to date. The General and Special Ideas are reproduced, with a slight alteration in the strength of the forces, from the Blue Book report of 1895 containing the conditions of a large number of typical problems, published for the use of officers.

### *General Idea.*

A Southern Force (Blue) is at ALDERSHOT, with a detached post at FLEET.

A detachment from a Northern Force (Red) at FRIMLEY has advanced as far as EELMOOR FARM.

### *Special Idea. Southern Force (Blue).*

On October 5, 19—, the Officer Cg. Southern Force at Aldershot is directed to provide for escort of a convoy

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ordered to proceed to the detached post at FLEET. The enemy being about FARNBOROUGH, the escort is to take special precautions to guard the convoy against surprise. The road to be taken is that south of BASINGSTOKE CANAL, which crosses PONDTAIL BRIDGE.

At 10 a.m. the convoy is drawn up on the ground north and west between the CLUB HOUSE and the CANAL, and is represented by some General Service wagons covering a depth on the road of 300 yards; the rate of march of the wagons is not to exceed 2½ miles per hour. The force to protect the convoy consists of one battalion of infantry, one squadron of cavalry, and one battery of field artillery; also a detachment from bearer company with three ambulance wagons.

*Special Idea. Northern Force (Red).*

On the morning of October 5, 19—, the Officer Cg. detachment at EELMOOR FARM receives intelligence that a convoy is about to start from ALDERSHOT for FLEET; he resolves to attack it.

At 10 a.m. the detachment of one battalion of infantry, one squadron of cavalry, and one battery of field artillery is halted at EELMOOR FARM. A half bearer company is attached to this force.

N.B.—All bridges over CANAL remain intact, including the temporary bridge near RUSHMOOR FLASH, and are to be available for the operations on both sides. No movement to take place before 10 a.m. MAJOR H. to command the Northern or Red Force. MAJOR S. to command the Southern or Blue Force. The CANAL is not fordable.

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Topographical Hints :—Taking the CLUB HOUSE as point of departure for the convoy, FLEET is, as the crow flies, 4 miles away to the N.W. ; Frimley is $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles away to the N.N.E. ; EELMOOR BRIDGE is 1 mile, NORRIS BRIDGE 2 miles, PONDTAIL BRIDGE $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, W. of CLUB HOUSE on the BASINGSTOKE CANAL.

*Narrative. Southern or Blue Force.*

MAJOR S. was provided with copies of the General Idea, and of the Special Idea for the Blue Force, at 9.30 a.m. on the ground adjacent to the CLUB HOUSE. He issued the following "operation orders :"—

**Convoy Orders ; by O. Cg. Southern Force (Blue).**

No. 1. CLUB HOUSE,
To Os. Cg. Units. *October* 5, 19—, 9.50 *a.m.*

1. The convoy ordered to proceed to FLEET will march by road south of CANAL and by PONDTAIL BRIDGE. It will be escorted by the troops under my command, one battalion infantry, one squadron cavalry, one battery field artillery.

2. The enemy is reported to be on the north bank of the CANAL.

3. At 10 a.m. one troop of cavalry will proceed rapidly to NORRIS BRIDGE to hold passage of CANAL at that point, sending patrols beyond PYESTOCK WOOD. One troop will cross RUSHMOOR BRIDGE and search ground on extreme right flank of our advance. The other two troops as escort for guns.

4. The infantry to be disposed as follows: One and a half companies as advanced guard, half a company as rear

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guard, one company as guard for wagons, one company as right flank guard, four companies as covering or main body.

5. At 10 a.m. the right flank guard will cross the CANAL by the RUSHMOOR BRIDGE, and move on right flank of the convoy at half a mile distance.

6. At the same hour the advanced guard will move off, followed by the main body with the battery, which will march in front of the wagons. The pace of the convoy of wagons will be $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles per hour.

7. The bearer company detachment will follow the convoy, and form a dressing-station if ordered.

8. I shall be at the head of the convoy.

(Sd.) S.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

These orders were written in a manifold order book, and the leaves issued to the commanders of units with some verbal explanations. The commander of the battalion told off Nos. 1 and 2 Companies to form the advanced and rear guards, No. 3 Company as guards for wagons, and No 4 Company for the flank guard. The remaining companies were to form the main body. The cavalry commander detailed the 1st troop to proceed to NORRIS BRIDGE, and the 2nd troop to cross RUSHMOOR BRIDGE; the 3rd and 4th troops to be escort to the guns.

At 10 a.m. the troops marched off.

At 5 minutes past 10 a.m., while MAJOR S. was waiting for the advanced guard to have reached CLAYCART HILL in advance of the main column, so that he could put the

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latter in motion, cavalry from north bank of CANAL signalled "enemy in sight."

The battery with its escort was at once ordered to proceed at a trot to EELMOOR HILL WEST, to come into action with a target of any formed body of the enemy on north side of CANAL, or of the enemy's guns should they be found in position.

At 10.10 a.m the cavalry from north bank signalled "enemy in force." At the same moment the main guard, reaching the top of CLAYCART HILL, came under fire of artillery from the direction of BALL HILL. The point of the advanced guard being now half a mile off, the convoy made a start, the main body of escort still at its head and moving off first. The wagons halted at foot of CLAYCART HILL while the enemy's artillery continued to fire.

At 10.15 a.m. the fire of the Southern Force battery from EELMOOR HILL WEST was signalled to have commenced, and the fire from BALL HILL ceased to be directed on the Blue advanced guard. A message was now received from the north bank to effect that a force of Red infantry was advancing upon EELMOOR BRIDGE from BALL HILL, and that the company of the Blue flank guard was engaged, but needed reinforcement.

The main body of infantry (Nos. 5, 6, 7, and 8 Companies) was accordingly directed to cross the canal by RUSHMOOR BRIDGE, and support the flank guard.

The fire of Red artillery being no longer directed upon the line of advance of the convoy, the latter continued to move forward, and at 10.20 a.m. reached the summit of CLAYCART HILL. The infantry flank guard, extended in a

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long skirmishing line, was now fully engaged with the enemy on LAFFAN'S PLAIN, and the main body which crossed RUSHMOOR BRIDGE was moving up to reinforce the flank guard.

A message was next received by MAJOR S. from the cavalry at NORRIS BRIDGE to say that on arrival there the bridge was found to be held by Red cavalry, and that it was impossible to push over to the other side. A patrol had, however, been sent on to PONDTAIL BRIDGE to endeavour to cross the CANAL at that point. MAJOR S. returned an urgent order to the cavalry to try if passage could be got over EELMOOR BRIDGE, and another order was sent to the advanced guard of infantry to push on to NORRIS BRIDGE.

At 10.30 a.m. the covering body of the Southern Force reinforced the flank guard (No. 4 Company), which was extended in a firing line and supports over a frontage of about 200 yards. It was, however, very much outflanked by the force opposed to it. The latter was also better covered than the flank guard, which had a number of casualties already. The senior officer of the covering body had rapidly extended his two leading companies along the bank of the CANAL as he advanced, and the company leaders brought them up in very open order, half of each company in a firing line and half in support. The line formed of these two companies was much longer than that of the opposing force, extending over quite 500 yards, and it approached and passed through the ranks of No. 4 Company with a rush ; the men of the flank guard lying down under such cover as they could get when Nos. 5 and 6 Companies went past. The flank guard company then rose and

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followed the two leading companies as a second line of skirmishers. Nos. 7 and 8 Companies were disposed in reserve behind BRIDGE HILL.

The convoy by this time had reached MILES HILL, when MAJOR S. received news from some scouts who had got over EELMOOR BRIDGE and worked up into PYESTOCK WOOD, to effect that the enemy was moving in force on PYESTOCK HILL behind the wood, and that the fight on LAFFAN'S PLAIN was possibly a feint to draw off the covering body of the escort.

MAJOR S. ordered the convoy to halt, and went on to NORRIS HILL to reconnoitre, arriving at the same time as the head of his advanced guard of infantry at 10.35 a.m. There he got further reports from his cavalry which confirmed the news he had already received. He determined to retire the convoy, as his covering body was beyond his reach, and the advanced guard and wagon guards would not be strong enough to enable him to force his way past the enemy, who was waiting to head him at NORRIS BRIDGE.

MAJOR S. ordered the advanced guard to take post on NORRIS HILL WEST, and to advance one company against NORRIS BRIDGE to hold the enemy. At the same time he despatched orders to the convoy to reverse the wagons and retire to the CLUB HOUSE. Also to the main body to disengage itself and recross the CANAL at EELMOOR BRIDGE to cover retreat of the convoy.

The COMMANDER himself, having given instructions as above to the commander of the advanced guard, turned back on the road to rejoin the convoy.

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*Narrative. Northern or Red Force.*

Copies of the General Idea and of the Special Idea[1] of the Northern Force were issued to MAJOR H. at 9.30 a.m. at EELMOOR FARM. After due consideration, and having consulted his map of the ground, MAJOR H. issued the following "Operation Orders."

**Attack Orders; by O. Cg. Northern Force (Red).**

No. 1. EELMOOR FARM,
To Os. Cg. Units. *October* 5, 19—, 9.50 *a.m.*

1. A convoy of the enemy is about to move from ALDERSHOT to FLEET, proceeding, it is expected, by the road south of BASINGSTOKE CANAL.

2. I intend to attack it with my command as per margin, my plan being to draw and hold the convoy's covering party on the north bank of CANAL, and to head off the wagons at NORRIS BRIDGE.

*One squadron.*
*One battery.*
*One battalion.*
*Half bearer co.*

3. Cavalry will send one troop to north bank of CANAL to give information as to march of convoy; two troops to NORRIS BRIDGE to stop reconnaissance of enemy; and one troop as escort for artillery.

4. The battery will join in holding attack from BALL HILL, changing target should convoy wagons come within range.

5. Infantry will furnish two companies for holding attack.

[1] For special idea of Northern Force, see page 67.

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The other six companies to PYESTOCK HILL, to head off convoy at NORRIS BRIDGE.

6. A dressing-station will be formed at IVELY FARM, and a collecting-station on the N.E. side of PYESTOCK WOOD.

7. I shall be with the artillery till 10.30 a.m.; after that hour at NORRIS BRIDGE.

(Sd.) H.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

Some verbal explanations were given with these orders, it being especially enjoined upon the leaders of the companies for the holding attack, that they should make a demonstration to afford an appearance of strength without disclosing the weakness of the force. They were to advance between the RESERVOIR and BALL HILL in direction of EELMOOR BRIDGE, keeping in wooded part to conceal their actual numbers. At 10 a.m. the troops marched off, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 Companies of the infantry being sent by the battalion commander to NORRIS BRIDGE, and the cavalry 1st and 2nd troops of the squadron to the same place, but at a more rapid pace. MAJOR H. rode on to BALL HILL with the field battery. A position for the guns was chosen by the artillery commander on the south side of the hill overlooking LAFFAN'S PLAIN. The guns were ready for action by 10.10 a.m., with their escort the 3rd troop on the east side of the hill, under cover. The 4th cavalry troop was already on its way to RUSHMOOR BRIDGE to reconnoitre as directed.

Nos. 7 and 8 Companies of the battalion advanced from EELMOOR FARM by the west side of the RESERVOIR, and on reaching LAFFAN'S PLAIN they extended into a skirmishing

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line with supports, each company having half its strength in the skirmishing line and half in support, and with its scouts out in extreme advance. They advanced through the scattered trees south-east of BALL HILL, in the direction of BRIDGE HILL, covering a frontage of about 400 yards, and making as much show as possible. At 10.15 MAJOR H. received report from the cavalry near DANGER HILL (dated 10.10) to the effect that Blue scouts prevented a close approach to RUSHMOOR BRIDGE; that the convoy had been sighted on the road south of BASINGSTOKE CANAL near RUSHMOOR FLASH, with infantry and artillery escort in force; and that Blue infantry was at RUSHMOOR BRIDGE, as if about to cross the CANAL.

The troops of Red cavalry sent to PYESTOCK HILL reached NORRIS BRIDGE at 10 minutes past 10 a.m., and part dismounted to hold the bridge. A few minutes later a Blue troop appeared on the road south of the CANAL, and, coming under fire of the Northern cavalry, fell back to MILES HILL.

At 10.15 a.m. the Northern infantry on LAFFAN'S PLAIN found a weak force of the convoy escort had crossed the CANAL at RUSHMOOR BRIDGE, and was moving towards them. The Red skirmishing line now opened fire, and, while keeping the men well hidden, made a demonstration of apparent force against the Blue infantry, which caused the latter to halt and take cover. The battery from BALL HILL at the same time opened fire upon the Southern infantry on CLAYCART HILL, which apparently led the convoy on the march, and was almost immediately itself brought under fire of hostile guns from the direction of EELMOOR HILL WEST.

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The force of infantry detached from the convoy to north of the CANAL appeared now to be receiving reinforcements.

A messenger from DANGER HILL at 10.20 a.m. informed the O. Cg. Northern Force that the convoy had apparently halted at the foot of CLAYCART HILL, when its leading infantry came under fire from BALL HILL, but exact observation was very difficult on account of the intervening trees on north side of CANAL. The convoy had advanced again after an interval of five minutes, when the Northern artillery were answered by the Southern battery. It was further reported that the reinforcing infantry of the Southern Force now north of the CANAL amounted to a strength of four companies.

Shortly after this an infantry engagement took place on LAFFAN'S PLAIN, in which the two companies of the Northern Force, being well posted on the defence amongst the trees, engaged and held several companies of the Southern Force. The guns on BALL HILL were unable to join in the fight, as they were kept occupied by the guns of the Southern Force firing from EELMOOR HILL WEST.

MAJOR H. remained on BALL HILL, and kept the wagons of the enemy's convoy under view until 10.30 a.m., when they passed out of sight, having apparently reached MILES HILL, and so no longer being under observation.

At 10.36 a.m. the six companies Northern Force reached PYESTOCK BRIDGE, and MAJOR H., on being informed of this, moved to the same place. The infantry of the Northern Force on LAFFAN'S PLAIN were by this time driven back by the superior force of their opponents into PYESTOCK WOOD. MAJOR H. sent them orders to hold on and keep the enemy engaged as long as possible, above all things not to let the

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Blue infantry get through the wood. The trees here, being very close together, offered a good barrier, easily defended by a small force.

On arriving at PYESTOCK HILL, MAJOR H. examined the ground carefully with a view of seeing if he should bring his battery there. He had intended to have done so if there was a good position for it, but he found that if placed in the most favourable spot on the south-west spur of the hill (POINT 284 on map) overlooking the CANAL, it could only just see the bridge, and a little way across the main road, on account of the close growth of trees at this point. The guns would, therefore, not be able in any way to command the approaches, and MAJOR H. determined not to move the battery from its present position.

As regards the rest of the force, the Red infantry was already posted to head the convoy when it appeared. One company was detached into the wood to line the western edge of it, overlooking canal and road near NORRIS BRIDGE. The two troops of cavalry were also posted so as to defend the bridge itself with dismounted fire. A strong force of infantry was held in reserve on PYESTOCK HILL behind the wood to make a counter attack.

### *General Narrative.*

At 10.45 a.m. the position of affairs at NORRIS BRIDGE was as follows: The Northern Force was present in much greater strength than its adversary, but was holding back till the convoy, which was confidently expected to continue its advance, should appear on the scene, when MAJOR H. would at once attack it. The fight was, however,

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precipitated by the Blue advanced guard coming up to NORRIS HILL WEST and taking post on its lower feature. One company of the advanced guard pushed forward through the trees and opened fire on NORRIS BRIDGE. The Red infantry replied, and the combatants engaged in a sort of wood fight without much result, each side being well protected by the timber. There was, however, no sign of the convoy coming up.

The advanced guard commander of the Blue force, finding the fire on his flank of Red infantry lining the bank of the CANAL on the south-western border of PYESTOCK WOOD was beginning to be troublesome, sent his supporting half-company to creep through the trees towards the CANAL bank in extended order to keep down the fire. This was done with good effect, and the advanced guard seemed now to be able to hold its own, but the Red COMMANDER had by this time found out how weak a force was engaged with him, and decided to make a counter attack in force on the south bank of the CANAL. This he accordingly did, and the Blue advanced guard was obliged to retire fighting through the trees, which thickly bordered both sides of the road at this part of its course.

When MAJOR H. had succeeded in pushing back the Southern Force troops as far as MILES HILL, he expected to find the convoy, and to have been able to secure it. He was, however, disappointed, as the convoy had not come further on the road than this point, and had retired towards CLAYCART HILL, the wagons reversing under protection of their convoy guards. The covering party, also, on LAFFAN'S PLAIN and the flank guard company had shaken off their adversary, and were filing over

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EELMOOR BRIDGE to interpose between the convoy and its pursuers, covered by the Blue guns from EELMOOR HILL WEST. The Blue infantry, however, did not effect this movement without considerable loss, being much exposed to the fire of Red artillery directed from BALL HILL, during the operation.

The "Cease fire" was sounded at 11.15 a.m., it being considered useless to continue the movements beyond this point.

*Summing up.*

The officers concerned having assembled on MILES HILL, the GENERAL OFFICER present, having heard statements from the UMPIRES and the OFFICERS COMMANDING the opposing forces, gave his opinion on the whole operation.

He thought it might be considered a drawn battle, neither side having succeeded in carrying out completely the object to be attained. At the same time the troops of each force were manœuvred with some skill, although mistakes had been committed.

The plan of the COMMANDER of the Southern Force was correct in principle, but defective in execution, the strength of the proportion of the escort detached to the north of the CANAL as a covering body being much too great. He was also wrong in not specially providing for reconnaissance over EELMOOR BRIDGE, which would have resulted in an earlier detection of the design of the Northern Force. As a matter of detail, the cavalry officer in charge of the advanced troop on this side was to blame for not having of his own initiative sent scouts over EELMOOR BRIDGE as he passed it by. When the Southern COMMANDER found

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out the enemy's plan, he acted judiciously in retiring his convoy, but if he had not detached so much of his escort to the north of the CANAL, he might still have forced his way through to FLEET.

The COMMANDER of the Northern Force made a good plan, and carried out his holding attack well, so as to succeed in keeping engaged a large portion of the enemy's escort with a small portion of his own troops. The weak point in his arrangements was the neglect to stop up EELMOOR BRIDGE, which he might have done at the same time that he sent cavalry to NORRIS BRIDGE. For this neglect no subordinate was to blame; MAJOR H. should have specially ordered it to be done. Through the omission, the dispositions at NORRIS BRIDGE, which were very judicious, failed of the success which they would otherwise have certainly obtained.

### *Comments.*

The principal lesson to be learnt from this exercise is connected with the distribution on the line of march of a road convoy escort. It is generally acknowledged that the escort should be subdivided in such fashion that, while a sufficient portion of it is reserved for the immediate defence and protection of the vehicles composing the convoy if attacked in column of route, the other portion should be kept in hand as an independent unit, to act as main body or covering body (being known by both names), with the mission of meeting and warding off a threatening enemy. This portion of the escort need not necessarily remain with the convoy on the actual route followed. It is at liberty

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to diverge therefrom either in whole or in part, if it can better avert an attack on the convoy; and if there is to be a fight, it is best for every reason that the scene of action be removed from the line of advance of the vehicles. Cavalry reconnaissance should be always pushed well out to the front and flanks, according to the circumstances of the case; and when the flank or flanks are especially open to attack, the escort commander will detach flank guards to offer a preliminary resistance to any attempt of the enemy to reach the line of march of the convoy.

In the present case we find the distribution of the immediate escort to the convoy arranged on fairly correct lines. An advanced guard and rear guard of two companies, with wagon guards of one company, making three companies altogether for immediate escort, would be about a right proportion, considering the strength of the force. Nor can we find fault with the COMMANDER for detailing a flank guard of a company to the north bank of the CANAL, as the enemy was reported to be hovering about in that quarter. But when we find the whole of the remainder of the escort, viz. four companies, sent after the flank guard to support it, we feel that the COMMANDER, to quote a homely proverb, is putting all his eggs into one basket. When he eventually finds his way blocked, out of eight companies he has five detached which he cannot recall, and his convoy, but for a timely warning given by some enterprising scouts who had penetrated PYESTOCK WOOD, must have fallen into the hands of the enemy. The COMMANDER of the convoy was fairly deceived by his opponent, and the strength of the portion of his escort detached to the flank was unduly great.



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The moral of this is evident. Although it is right to give independence of action to the covering body, there should be a distinct limit to the proportion of the escort which may be detached to a distance from the line of advance, especially to a flank.

The other important point to notice is the neglect to reconnoitre in every required quarter, and the consequences which may easily result from any such omission. Cavalry employed on scouting duty should remember that negative information is often as valuable to their COMMANDER as positive news of the enemy's presence. They must, therefore, not only examine the places where they think the enemy may be found, but also look for him where they do not expect to find him.

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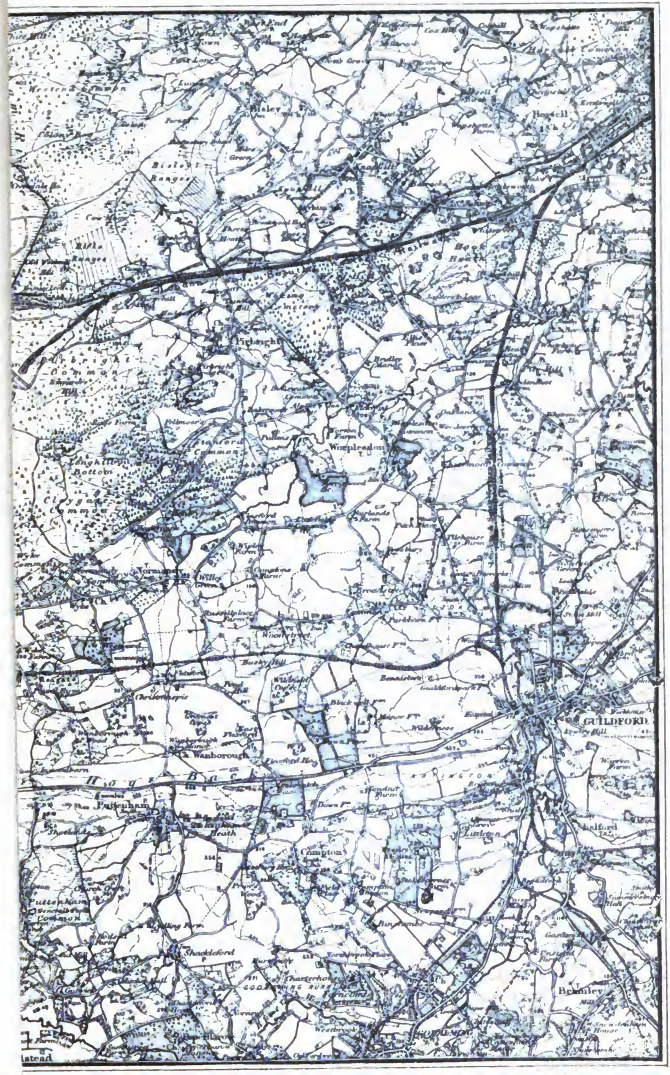
Haslemere
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Ripley
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Esher
Epsom
Leatherhead
Dorking
Reigate
Redhill
Caterham
Oxted
Godstone
Tandridge
Limpsfield
Westerham
Sevenoaks
Tonbridge
Edenbridge
Penshurst
Tunbridge Wells
Crowborough
Uckfield
Lewes
Hurstpierpoint
Horsham
Billingshurst
Pulborough
Arundel
Chichester
Midhurst
Liphook
Bramley
Alton
Basingstoke
Odiham
Hook
Winchfield
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Crondall
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Bentley
Alton
Selborne
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Petersfield
Rogate
Harting
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Fernhurst
Haslemere
Hindhead
Godalming
Guildford
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Albury
Chilworth
Wonersh
Cranleigh
Ewhurst
Shalford
Bramley
Wanborough
Puttenham
Compton
Seale
Tongham
Aldershot
Frimley
Camberley
Bagshot
Windlesham
Chobham
Woking
Horsell
Byfleet
Weybridge
Walton
Esher
Cobham
Ripley
Send
Wisley
Pyrford
Woking
Horsell
Chertsey
Addlestone
Thorpe
Egham
Staines
Virginia Water
Sunningdale
Ascot
Windsor
Eton
Slough
Langley
Iver
Uxbridge
Harefield
Rickmansworth
Watford
Bushey
Harrow
Pinner
Ruislip
Northwood
Hillingdon
Hayes
Southall
Ealing
Brentford
Chiswick
Hammersmith
Kensington
Chelsea
Westminster
Lambeth
Wandsworth
Putney
Barnes
Richmond
Kingston
Surbiton
Malden
Coombe
Wimbledon
Mitcham
Croydon
Beckenham
Bromley
Penge
Sydenham
Dulwich
Peckham
Camberwell
Southwark
Bermondsey
Rotherhithe
Deptford
Greenwich
Woolwich
Plumstead
Erith
Crayford
Dartford
Bexley
Sidcup
Chislehurst
Orpington
Farnborough
Keston
Hayes
Downe
Biggin Hill
Westerham
Edenbridge
Oxted
Limpsfield
Godstone
Tandridge
Caterham
Warlingham
Chelsham
Farleigh
Sanderstead
Purley
Coulsdon
Reigate
Redhill
Merstham
Gatton
Nutfield
Bletchingley
Godstone
Blindley Heath
Lingfield
Dormansland
Felbridge
East Grinstead
Forest Row
Hartfield
Withyham
Groombridge
Tunbridge Wells
Rusthall
Speldhurst
Penshurst
Chiddingstone
Edenbridge
Leigh
Tonbridge
Hildenborough
Sevenoaks
Otford
Shoreham
Eynsford
Farningham
Swanley
Crockenhill
Hextable
Foots Cray
Sidcup
Bexley
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Dartford
Erith
Plumstead
Woolwich
Greenwich
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Keston

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# E.

## TACTICAL OPERATION AT SHORNCLIFFE.

(*See Maps* 3, 4.)

ADVANCED GUARD *v.* REAR GUARD.

*April* 15, 19—.

THE General and Special Ideas of this scheme have been set by an officer well acquainted with the country over which the movements are supposed to take place. The problem has been carefully worked out, war-game fashion, with constant reference to the ground; the latter, being not far from the CAMP, enables a very accessible study to be presented to officers of all ranks stationed at SHORNCLIFFE. The scheme can be taken to the actual ground, and the topographical features of the scene of operations carefully noted, whilst the narrative of the movements is followed step by step. As a practical lesson in map-reading alone the problem will be useful.

### *General Idea.*

A portion of a hostile Southern Force (Blue) is retiring from HYTHE upon DOVER, before regaining its transports.

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A Northern Force (Red) is advancing from CANTERBURY against it.

*Special Idea. Southern Force (Blue).*

The O. Cg. Rear Guard to the retiring force is at CAPEL LODGE, on the FOLKESTONE and DOVER road, on the evening of April 14. His force consists of one troop of cavalry, one battery of field artillery, one battalion of infantry, and two sections of mounted infantry, with a half bearer company. At 9 p.m. he receives the following order:—

"DOVER,
"*April* 14, 19—, 9 *p.m.*

"Advanced troops of the enemy have detrained at ELHAM STATION from CANTERBURY. To-morrow morning hold the DOVER road to bar their advance, which may be looked for about 9 a.m. Hold on to the position for two hours, and then fall back on DOVER."

*Special Idea. Northern Force (Red).*

The Northern Force arrives at ELHAM on evening of April 14, 19—, and sends its Advanced Guard on to PARK FARM. It consists of one troop of cavalry, one battery of field artillery, one battalion of infantry, and two sections of mounted infantry, with a half bearer company. Soon after his arrival at the farm, where he is about to bivouac for the night, the O. Cg. Advanced Guard receives the following order:—

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"ELHAM STATION,
"*April* 14, 19—, 9 *p.m.*

"I hear enemy is retiring by FOLKESTONE-DOVER road, but requires time to embark his troops. Push him hard to-morrow morning, and drive back his covering force. Move forward about 9 a.m., and I shall be able to support you two hours later."

N.B.—Operations to commence on the Blue side at 9 a.m., and on the Red side at 9.15 a.m. No troops to leave the respective places of assembly before these hours. MAJOR E. to command the Blue Force, and MAJOR F. to command the Red Force.

Topographical Hints:—ELHAM is 6 miles N.N.W. of FOLKESTONE, on the CANTERBURY and DOVE line, S.E.R. PADDLESWORTH lies between ELHAM and FOLKESTONE, and PARK FARM between ELHAM and PADDLESWORTH. CAPEL LODGE is 2 miles from FOLKESTONE on the DOVER road.

## *Narrative. Southern Force (Blue).*

The rendezvous of this force took place at CAPEL LODGE, where, at 8.30 a.m., April 15, 19—, MAJOR E. was handed the General Idea, and also the Special Idea for the Southern Force.

In considering the project MAJOR E. examined the map of the ground over which he had to operate. He saw that the position WINGATE HILL—HOPE FARM—LADY WOOD commanded and overlooked the PALMERSHILL FARM, near which place the road from ELHAM and PADDLESWORTH meets the main CANTERBURY road, and both join the DOVER road,

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which passes over WINGATE HILL. The enemy was reported to be in the north-west—PADDLESWORTH way, no doubt—and Major E. determined to defend the position on WINGATE HILL, commanding the DOVER road against an attack from the north and west, if such should be made. LADY WOOD, on the right flank of the position, appeared a weak spot, as both through the wood and round the wood his flank might here be turned. It would not be possible with so small a force to hold the outside perimeter of this wood, but he could watch the approach to it by a small force on the heights, posted on the east side at or near HOCKLEY SOLE and HURST FARM. He trusted to holding a more contracted main position north-east of HOPE FARM, to catch troops debouching from the wood. He would have his main reserves at HOPE FARM, and by occupying the west side of the farm and WINGATE PLATEAU he proposed to guard the FOLKESTONE—DOVER road where it crossed WINGATE HILL.

The "operation orders" for the Southern Force dispositions were written by 8.50 a.m. in a quadruplicate order book, and a copy of the combined orders issued to each officer commanding a unit; verbal instructions being given at the same time to explain in fuller detail what was wanted to be carried out.

### Defence Orders; by O. Cg. Rear Guard.

No. 1. CAPEL LODGE,
To Os. Cg. Units. *April* 15, 19—, 8.50 *a.m.*

1. The enemy's scouts have been seen about PADDLESWORTH, and the hostile force is expected to attack us this morning.

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2. The Rear Guard under my command, as per margin,

*One troop.*
*One battery.*
*One battalion.*
*Two sections M.I.*
*Half bearer co.*

will move off at 9 a.m. and take up a defensive position at WINGATE HILL and LADY WOOD, to bar the DOVER road to the enemy's advance, until orders may be given to retire.

3. The cavalry will send patrols to PADDLESWORTH, UPHILL, and STANDEN. The remainder of troop will act with mounted infantry to guard the right flank of the position, proceeding to HOCKLEY SOLE and HURST FARM for that purpose.

4. The infantry will occupy WINGATE HILL, having reserves on east side of HOPE FARM.

5. The field battery will follow, having one section of infantry as escort. The O. Cg. battery will select position near HOPE FARM to meet attack from north-west.

6. A dressing-station will be fixed at LITTLE HOPE on the DOVER road.

7. I shall be near HOPE FARM.

8. Lateral communications to be kept up by signalling.

(Sd.) E.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

The orders being issued, the troops moved off at 9 a.m. On arriving at WINGATE HILL, the infantry battalion commander, under MAJOR E.'s orders, placed Nos. 1, 2, and 3 Companies on the ridge west of HOPE FARM, No. 3 Company being in local reserve. No. 4 Company was put in LADY WOOD, at the north-eastern end, and the remaining half-battalion, consisting of Nos. 5, 6, 7, and 8 Companies, was posted as general reserve at HOPE FARM. A position for

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the guns was selected by the artillery commander on the 500 contour, at a spot about a quarter of a mile west of the farm.

News from the cavalry patrol near PADDLESWORTH was received at 9.35 a.m. to effect that a Red force of the three arms was now on the march through PADDLESWORTH, and that the enemy's patrols were making for UPHILL. A report from the latter place, received a few minutes later, stated that the enemy's scouts were being checked by the Blue cavalry.

At 9.50 a.m. MAJOR E. was told by cavalry scouts driven back from TERLINGHAM that mounted infantry and also infantry were approaching from that quarter. These troops were soon observed from WINGATE HILL, moving along the routes which ran south and south-east from TERLINGHAM. As they were only about a mile distant, the artillery near HOPE FARM opened fire upon them (thus disclosing the position of the Blue guns), and the infantry on WINGATE HILL ridge also fired, but without much effect, as the assailants were all more or less covered in their advance by irregularities of ground and by the numerous fences; neither did they move in closed-up bodies, offering good targets to their opponents.

The attack appearing to threaten from this quarter and to be gradually progressing, MAJOR E. ordered up two companies of the general reserve to WINGATE HILL, which he posted on the left of his position.

At 10.5 a.m. an urgent message was received from mounted troops at HOCKLEY SOLE on the right flank, to say they were being attacked by mounted infantry and cavalry, and, finding their position too exposed, they had commenced

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to fall back on HURST FARM. Also that troops were being moved behind COOMBE WOOD, and that hostile artillery was being brought up.

Almost at the same time that this report was received, artillery fire was opened on the Southern battery by guns in a concealed position near ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, and an infantry force was observed coming down the hill in small detachments between the CHURCH and COOMBE WOOD; also to the east of the CHURCH.

Presently the attack on the right flank of the Southern Force developed, and the OFFICER COMMANDING the Blue side, perceiving that this was about to be the main attack, recalled the two companies he had previously moved to the left flank, and placed them at HOPE FARM; but, notwithstanding that he received messages from HURST FARM for reinforcement, did not venture to further separate his force. Reports now reached the COMMANDER to the effect that the company at north-east end of LADYWOOD had been forced to fall back, and that the hostile infantry on the enemy's extreme flank were supporting the attack of their mounted troops on HURST FARM.

### *Narrative. Northern Force (Red).*

The rendezvous of this force took place at PARK FARM, where at 8.45 a.m. MAJOR F. was handed the Special Idea [1] for his side.

On examining the map of the ground, MAJOR F. came to the conclusion that his adversary would probably attempt to cover the retirement of the Southern main column by

[1] For Special Idea, Northern Force, see page 84.

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taking up some strong position in vicinity of the DOVER road. It would be the business of the cavalry on his side to find this position, and enable an attack to be made upon it from the most favourable quarter. His "operation orders" were accordingly drafted with due regard to these considerations, and were as follows:—

**March Orders; by O. Cg. Northern Force (Red).**

No. 1. PARK FARM,
To Os. Cg. Units. *April* 15, 19—, 9 *a.m.*

1. The enemy is retiring upon the DOVER road, and this force, as per margin, is ordered to attack his rear guard, and if possible to drive it back.

*One troop.*
*One battery.*
*One battalion.*
*Two sections M.I.*
*Half bearer co.*

2. The troop will proceed at once to the front, and send me back information as to the position, if any, taken up by the enemy's covering troops.

3. The remainder of my command will move off by the PADDLESWORTH road, one section mounted infantry forming advanced guard and also escorting the field battery, which will lead the column. The second section mounted infantry will follow the guns.

4. The infantry will come next, and will be protected by flank guards on each flank.

5. The bearer company will follow the infantry.

6. I shall be with the guns.

(Sd.) F.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

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The O. Cg. Cavalry was specially directed to lose no time in letting the COMMANDER have information of where the enemy was forming, as no arrangements could be made for attacking him until it was known where he was to be found.

At 9.15 a.m. the cavalry proceeded rapidly to the front, and the rest of the force marched off as directed.

When MAJOR F., who was with the guns, arrived at PADDLESWORTH, he halted the column outside the village for the purpose of receiving news from his cavalry, having desired that all reports in the first place should be made to him at this point.

At 9.35 a.m. he got his first news, which was that the enemy appeared to be taking up position on WINGATE HILL to cover the DOVER road.

MAJOR F., who had dismounted whilst waiting, now consulted his map again, and determined what course to pursue. He saw that the position at WINGATE HILL would be a very strong one if attacked in front, but there was covered approach to its right flank, and it could be turned round the north and east of LADYWOOD.

At 9.40 a.m. confirmatory news of the enemy's position was received, and MAJOR F. immediately issued the following orders, which he had already drafted.

**Attack Orders; by O. Cg. Northern Force (Red).**

No. 2. PADDLESWORTH,
To Os. Cg. Units. *April* 15, 19—, 9.40 *a.m.*

1. The enemy being reported to have taken position at WINGATE HILL to command the DOVER road, I intend to attack him and drive him back.

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2. A demonstration and feint will be made from TERLINGHAM by one section mounted infantry and a company of the infantry battalion, on the enemy's left flank.

3. The rest of the troops will march to COOMBE WOOD by UPHILL, turning north-east at bench mark 544 on map, at which point the troops named in last order for false attack will proceed to TERLINGHAM.

4. On arriving near COOMBE WOOD, the main force will halt in a concealed position; the guns will find a post near ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH (with an infantry escort), to bring WINGATE HILL under fire. The section of mounted infantry will act on extreme left flank against any troops opposed to them; and the infantry will move round the north-east end of LADYWOOD to attack the flank and right rear of the enemy's main position.

5. A dressing-station will be established at TERLINGHAM.

6. I shall be with the artillery.

(Sd.) F.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

At 9.45 a.m. the troops moved on from PADDLESWORTH.

The feint from TERLINGHAM was proceeded with by an advance with much show being made in the first instance by the mounted infantry. When they had drawn fire at long range from the enemy's position, they dismounted, and, getting their horses under cover, advanced in two lines, with 50 yards' distance between the lines, the men being in single rank at 15 yards' intervals, thus covering a good deal of ground. The infantry company No. 1, in rear, was so

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skilfully disposed as to give the appearance of a strong force being present in support.

When the rest of the Northern Force arrived at the north side of COOMBE WOOD, the cavalry troop, less some patrols still out, joined MAJOR F., and he was now more definitely informed as to the enemy's position. Mounted infantry and some cavalry appeared to be holding HOCKLEY SOLE. MAJOR F. despatched his cavalry and the section of mounted infantry late on advanced guard duty to attack them, and to drive them away from protecting the flank of the position. This was done with good effect, and the Blue mounted troops, although rather stronger than their assailants, being taken by surprise, and, moreover, thinking the Southern infantry was backing up the attack, fell back on HURST FARM.

At 10.5 a.m. the Red artillery, having found a good and somewhat concealed position near ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, opened fire on the Blue artillery in its post near HOPE FARM. The infantry of the Northern Force also advanced against the north-east end of LADY WOOD, which was defended by a company of the Southern Force.

Gradually the attack on this flank of the Blue position was strongly developed, and the company in LADY WOOD had to retreat through the wood. One of the Red infantry companies, No. 2, which came from the east side of ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, was diverted to join in the attack of the mounted troops on HURST FARM.

### *General Narrative.*

At this period of the fight it became very clear to the COMMANDER of the Southern Force that the attack from

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TERLINGHAM was altogether a feint, and he accordingly drew off all the troops he could towards HOPE FARM to try and keep the enemy back. The latter was now working round Blue's flank, and even threatening his right rear, so as to make him apprehensive for his line of retreat. The position of the Southern artillery, which was a good one for defence of the position from an attack in front or on the west side, was now of little value except for the purpose of replying to the guns at ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH; but as the Northern infantry closed in it was no longer possible for the Blue guns to remain where they were. The artillery commander, having only an infantry escort, found it difficult to wait until a mounted one could be afforded, and, finding it getting very hot for his men and horses, limbered up and galloped off by the DOVER road to a fresh position near the VALIANT SAILOR P.H. Here the guns came again into action, but, having no escort, were quickly captured by some of the Northern mounted infantry, which just then came up from the attack of HURST FARM. They had failed to carry this post by themselves, but, being relieved by infantry in its attack, they had now remounted and come on to raid the enemy on his line of retreat.

The engagement about HOPE FARM still went on, and as his time was not up, the COMMANDER of the Southern Force was unwilling to fall back. At 10.50 a.m., however, the "Cease fire" was sounded, when it was found that the troops of both forces were somewhat mixed up on the HOPE FARM PLATEAU, and that HURST FARM still held out.

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*Summing up.*

The COMMANDERS of the Northern and Southern Forces, their subordinate officers, and the UMPIRES having assembled together, the CHIEF UMPIRE called upon all concerned to explain the dispositions, giving, when necessary, reasons and opinions. He then reviewed the situation, and stated that he considered an intelligent appreciation of the ground had been grasped by both COMMANDERS. The plan intimated by the Red or Northern Force of an enveloping flanking attack *vid* LADY WOOD was under the conditions quite correct, as the country in front of the WINGATE HILL position was very open, the ground steep, and view clear for the defenders. For the movement from TERLINGHAM the Northern mounted infantry had been properly utilized, and, backed up by a small force of infantry, had the desired effect of making the Southern COMMANDER disclose his hand to a certain extent by opening with artillery fire, and by reinforcing his left flank.

With regard to the Blue or Southern Force, the position was well chosen, and, had a little more time been available to allow of its being artificially strengthened on the right flank, it would have been a difficult task to carry it. Even limited as the time was, something might have been done, he thought, to strengthen HOPE FARM to the advantage of the defence. The COMMANDER of the Southern Force was a little too precipitate in assuming the demonstration from TERLINGHAM to be the main attack, necessitating his changing dispositions at a later period of the action, which might have been avoided if he had

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awaited the further development of the hostile false movement before sending troops from the right to the left flank.

The CHIEF UMPIRE also thought that a mounted escort in a rear-guard action was a necessity for artillery, a change of position for guns becoming often necessary, as happened on this occasion with the Southern battery; the guns being eventually withdrawn without protection with fatal result. It is true that the Northern Force also had an infantry escort for their guns, but in this case, the Northern Force being the assailants, there was not the same possibility of a rapid change of position becoming necessary for their artillery.

The CHIEF UMPIRE considered that the points mentioned were all of importance, and begged the officers present to bear the lessons learnt from this tactical operation well in mind.

## *Comments.*

This appears to be an excellent example of the careful balancing of chances which have to be made by any independent commander, before deciding upon a definite line of action. It was Red's object to drive back Blue on DOVER as quickly as possible, so as to impede the progress of the re-embarkation of the Blue main force. Had he had plenty of troops to back him up, the Northern COMMANDER might have tried a hammer-and-tongs attack on the position at HOPE FARM, with a view to pushing back the Southern Force quicker; but if he did so he had to take the chance of a probable, or at all events possible, defeat.

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His instructions were to push the enemy, but not to expect support for two hours. Under these circumstances he decided against the risk of a frontal attack, and prepared to make a flanking enveloping movement by which he could carry the position. This would necessarily take some time, and would postpone the hoped for harrying of the main body at DOVER, but it was the safest course to pursue in the opinion of the Northern COMMANDER.

In this study we have an example of the necessity of keeping the reserve force concentrated, in inverse proportion to the amount of knowledge of the enemy's dispositions and strength possessed by the COMMANDER. We also have an instance of the use of a mounted escort for field artillery, who in a rear-guard engagement must expect to have to change position rapidly to a flank or to the rear.

We further see in this problem an instance of a position to hold which has its strong points and also its weak ones, with an illustration of how best to dispose one's troops to the best advantage on the HOPE FARM plateau without undue extension, at the same time taking due precautions against a surprise attack through LADY WOOD, and also providing adequate support to meet an attack in any direction, with a fair chance of disengaging from the position when it appears desirable to fall back.



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# F.

## TACTICAL OPERATION AT SHORNCLIFFE.

(*See Maps* 3, 4.)

ATTACK AND DEFENCE OF A CONVOY.

*August* 21, 19—.

THE General and Special Ideas of this scheme have been set by an officer well acquainted with the country over which the movements are supposed to take place. The problem has been carefully worked out, war-game fashion, with constant reference to the ground; which latter, not far from the CAMP, enables a very accessible study to be presented to officers of all ranks stationed at SHORNCLIFFE. The scheme can be taken to the actual ground, and the topographical features of the scene of operations carefully noted, while the narrative of the movements is followed step by step.

### *General Idea.*

A Southern Force has landed at HYTHE, and has an advanced post at UPPER STANDEN. A Northern Force is at BARFRESTON, with an advanced post at WOOTTON.

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*Special Idea. Southern Force (Blue).*

The advanced post at UPPER STANDEN requires to be provisioned. Country carts and wagons have been impressed, and are collected at NEWINGTON. On the morning of August 20, the following order is issued at HYTHE :—

"HYTHE, *August* 20, 19—

"A force under command of MAJOR Q., consisting of one battalion of infantry, one squadron of cavalry, one battery of field artillery, and two sections of mounted infantry, with a half bearer company, will march this afternoon to NEWINGTON, where it will be billeted for the night. Early to-morrow morning the COMMANDER will cause the necessary vehicles for a convoy of provisions and stores, which are being collected by the Commissariat, to be packed in a convenient position and the loading completed. When all is ready, the convoy will march to the camp at UPPER STANDEN under escort of MAJOR Q.'s party. The start should, if possible, be not later than 9 a.m.

"V.,

"COMMANDANT OF HYTHE."

*Special Idea. Northern Force (Red).*

On the morning of August 20, the officer in command at WOOTTON receives the following order :—

"BARFRESTON, *August* 20, 19—

"You will send off this evening after dusk a force under command of MAJOR T., consisting of one battalion of infantry, one squadron of cavalry, one battery of field

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artillery, and two sections of mounted infantry, with a half bearer company, to WINTERAGE FARM, where arrangements will be made for them to bivouac. They will take precautions for protection of the force during the night. To-morrow morning the force will march in sufficient time to intercept a convoy of stores which the enemy is about to despatch from NEWINGTON to his advanced post at UPPER STANDEN. The convoy is expected to start about 9 a.m.

"By order, X.,
"STAFF OFFICER."

N.B.—The rendezvous of the Southern Force to be at NEWINGTON at 8.30 a.m. No troops to leave before 9 a.m. The rendezvous of the Northern Force to be at WINTERAGE FARM at 8.15 a.m. No troops to leave before 8.45 a.m.

Topographical Hints:—NEWINGTON lies N.W. of SHORNCLIFFE CAMP, and is not far from it. BARFRESTON is $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles N.N.E. of FOLKESTONE. UPPER STANDEN is $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles N. of FOLKESTONE. WOOTTON is 6 miles N. of FOLKESTONE. WINTERAGE FARM is $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles N. of SHORNCLIFFE CAMP. All distances as crow flies.

## *Narrative. Southern Force (Blue).*

The rendezvous for MAJOR Q.'s force was at NEWINGTON at 8.30 a.m. The COMMANDER was there handed a copy of the General Idea and also of the Special Idea for his force. While the troops and convoy were being assembled by his Staff Officer, MAJOR Q. proceeded to consider the position, and consulted his map of the ground. There were several

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roads by which UPPER STANDEN might be reached from NEWINGTON, but practical objections to the routes *vid* PADDLESWORTH and *vid* SANDGATE and FOLKESTONE coast road reduced the number to two, viz. the upper road over CHERITON HILL, and the lower road by CHERITON TOWN, both of which led to and joined CÆSAR'S CAMP.

MAJOR Q. determined to use the lower road, although it was somewhat longer than the other route, and to endeavour to lead the enemy into preparing to stop the advance on the upper road. His plan involved seizing CÆSAR'S CAMP, which he considered the most important tactical point on the route, and this he proposed to do with his mounted troops, if possible, in the first instance, but if they failed, he would support them later on by infantry, backed up by artillery fire from a good position, which the guns could reach by a flank march.

MAJOR Q. detailed two spare wagons with escort of a troop of cavalry to form a false convoy on the upper road. These wagons were to start at 9 a.m., but to advance at a very slow pace, making as much dust as possible, with great demonstration of reconnaissance on part of the troop of cavalry to account for slow progress; the object being to deceive the enemy, and to cause report to be made to the COMMANDER of the other side that the convoy had chosen the upper road for its route. By this means time would be gained by the Southern Force, during which the COMMANDER might mature his plans, and obtain ample information as to the enemy's designs, at the same time securing the advantage of the initiative for his side. The real road to be taken by the convoy would be from NEWINGTON by the CHERITON TOWN lower road, turning

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up north at ALL SOULS' CHURCH, and proceeding as far as the PUMPING STATION of the FOLKESTONE WATERWORKS before the convoy came to a halt, to await the opening up of the further part of the route *viâ* CÆSAR'S CAMP.

At 8.40 a.m. the following "operation orders" were issued by MAJOR Q. :—

**Convoy Orders; by O. Cg. Southern Force (Blue).**

No. 1. NEWINGTON,
To Os. Cg. Units. *October* 21, 19—, 8.40 *a.m.*

1. A convoy, escorted by the force under my command as per margin, will leave NEWINGTON at 9 a.m. for UPPER STANDEN, proceeding by the lower CHERITON TOWN road as far as the PUMPING STATION, where it will halt until further progress is safe *viâ* CÆSAR'S CAMP and upper road.

*One squadron.*
*One battery.*
*One battalion.*
*Two sections M.I.*
*Half bearer co.*

2. A false convoy of two country wagons with one troop as escort will leave NEWINGTON at 9 a.m., and proceed by upper road to deceive enemy.

3. Two troops cavalry, with one section mounted infantry, will push forward by lower road to seize CÆSAR'S CAMP.

4. The fourth troop of cavalry will reconnoitre towards PADDLESWORTH and CÆSAR'S CAMP (upper road).

5. Immediate escort of convoy to be three companies infantry, for advanced and rear guards and guards for wagons; five companies as main or covering body.

6. Battery, with escort of one section mounted infantry, will head troops on lower road. Main body in rear of guns.

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7. Bearer company will follow infantry, but not proceed further than ALL SOULS' CHURCH.

8. I shall be with the main body.

(Sd.) Q.,

MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

These orders being written in a memorandum-book with interleaved carbon paper, a copy was issued to each commanding officer. MAJOR Q. read over the orders, and explained them personally in so doing. He made it clear to the officer in charge of the false convoy that it should advance very slowly, making plenty of dust to deceive the enemy. The troop as escort would reconnoitre widely, and send information, if obtained, back through NEWINGTON. He also informed the artillery commander that the battery would probably be required, on nearing CÆSAR'S CAMP, to move out rapidly to the flank, and take post on high ground about WINGATE HILL.

The commander of the infantry battalion detailed Nos. 1, 2, and 3 Companies to form immediate escort for the convoy. Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 Companies were to form the main or covering body.

At 9 a.m. the troops marched off, MAJOR Q. himself accompanying the main body, which marched just in front of the convoy.

At 9.25 a.m., being then close to CHERITON TOWN, MAJOR Q. received news from his cavalry on the upper road to effect that the false convoy had proceeded as far as PEAN, where it had halted at the eastern exit of the village, and that the cavalry escort, by manœuvring as if reconnoitring, had succeeded so far in deceiving the enemy,

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who was reported to be near GIBRALTAR by information received from the country people.

At 9.50 a.m. the main body and artillery of the Blue Force arrived at the PUMPING STATION. Several messages from the cavalry were received on the road, showing that the Northern or Red Force was disposing troops to attack the convoy on the upper road when it should reach CHERITON HILL. An unfavourable report was also delivered from CÆSAR'S CAMP to effect that this position was already occupied by hostile mounted troops.

MAJOR Q. now met the officer in charge of the mounted party told off to take CÆSAR'S CAMP, who rode back to meet the COMMANDER, and a consultation took place. The field battery, with its escort of mounted infantry, was sent off at once by cross-country roads to WINGATE HILL, where the artillery officer, having consulted his map, hoped to get a good position on the 500 contour to command CÆSAR'S CAMP. The distance of WINGATE HILL being about two miles by road, the guns were expected to reach their position and be ready for action by 10 minutes past 10 o'clock.

Three companies, Nos. 6, 7, and 8, were told off to attack CÆSAR'S CAMP, supported by the cavalry and mounted infantry already in position, with their horses under cover. Verbal orders were given to the commanders of the infantry companies, and the troops marched off, guided by the cavalry officer, to take post on the south side of CÆSAR'S CAMP, where they would be ready to attack by the time the artillery were able to co-operate. MAJOR Q. accompanied this force, leaving the convoy halted at the PUMPING STATION, under protection of the troops forming

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its immediate escort. The remaining companies of the main body, Nos. 4 and 5, went with MAJOR Q. to be utilized as a general reserve. Before marching off, the COMMANDER despatched a written order by cyclist messenger to the bearer company at ALL SOULS' CHURCH, directing a dressing-station to be there established, and a collecting-station to be pushed forward to the position on the road where the convoy was halted.

On arriving near the 200 contour, where the main road crosses it, without the movement of the infantry companies being betrayed to the enemy, whose reconnaissance was effectually prevented by the Blue cavalry and mounted infantry already on the ground, cover was obtained for the reinforcements in close vicinity to the main road.

At 10 a.m. MAJOR Q. received further news from his cavalry. The enemy had just succeeded in discovering that the convoy on the upper road, which had now moved forward as far as the foot of the steep ascent on the CHERITON HILL road, not far from the quarry pit, and had there again halted, was a fraud; and they were now moving troops from the upper ground, where they had been disposed on the line DANE FARM—GIBRALTAR in concealed positions. The Southern cavalry was hanging about them, but could not retard the advance of the Northern forces.

The infantry of the Southern Force began now to move into position for delivering the attack, and at 10.10 a.m. it advanced against CÆSAR'S CAMP in a long enveloping line formed of Nos. 6 and 7 Companies, extended at six-paces intervals, with supports behind in similar formation. Each company had half its strength in the firing line, and when it was finally extended the whole line

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occupied a frontage of 600 paces, and practically attacked the position held by the Northern Force on three sides. No. 8 Company was acting as local reserve, and was posted by half companies under some cover a short distance in rear. Nos. 4 and 5 Companies were brought up by Major Q., and placed in the Old Chalk Pit as general reserve. As the assailants opened fire the supporting guns of the Southern Force commenced to range from Wingate Hill, and, after two or three trial shots, shells began to fall amongst the defenders of Cæsar's Camp. At the same time the Blue infantry attackers came under a very heavy fire, both from the summit of Cæsar's Camp and from the spur on Cheriton Hill to west of the Waterworks, where a strong force of Red infantry appeared to have been concealed.

The Southern troops suffered severely, and were not continued to be assisted as they had expected by the supporting artillery on Wingate Hill, which was seemingly otherwise engaged, as after the first few rounds shells ceased to fall amongst the defenders of Cæsar's Camp.

### *Narrative. Northern Force (Red).*

The rendezvous for Major T.'s force was at Winterage Farm at 8.15 a.m. The problem submitted to him was how to intercept with greatest certainty, and in the most favourable position for the purpose, the convoy of stores named in the Special Idea,[1] before it got too far on its route to Upper Standen from Newington.

Having received his instructions, and being provided

[1] For Special Idea Northern Force, see page 99.

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with a map of the ground and of the surrounding country, MAJOR T. proceeded to consider how his purpose could be best effected.

UPPER STANDEN lay in the general direction of DOVER, and there were several roads by which the convoy might proceed from NEWINGTON. It could not, however, pass near PADDLESWORTH, because the Northern troops in some force were known to be in that direction; therefore the roads which led by CHERITON HILL and by CHERITON TOWN, and that along the coast by SANDGATE, were alone open to the convoy. Of these the last named would have been of an unnecessary length, and the first one, being shorter and more direct than the second one, appeared the most likely of the three to be adopted. MAJOR T., however, considered that his plan must provide for the convoy selecting the road by CHERITON TOWN as an alternative route, and he trusted to his cavalry giving him the earliest information on this head. He recognized the importance tactically of CÆSAR'S CAMP for either route, and decided to get possession as soon as possible of this point by means of his mounted troops. His dispositions would be based to a certain extent on the probability of the convoy taking the upper road, but capable of being altered in case the enemy preferred the lower road, and MAJOR T. considered, as he was about to work on interior lines, he would have ample time to meet new conditions in such eventuality.

At 8.25 a.m. he had determined what to do, and issued the following combined "operation orders"—writing them in a memorandum-book with carbon paper interleaved—giving each of the commanding officers a copy, and keeping one copy for himself. He also read over the orders to each

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officer, and explained them verbally when required. Fifteen minutes were then available for putting the troops in the best positions for moving off quickly at 8.45 a.m. to seize important points; thus securing the initiative, and forcing the enemy to fall in as far as possible with the designs of the Northern Force.

### Attack Orders; by O. Cg. Northern Force (Red).

No. 1.
To Os. Cg. Units.

WINTERAGE FARM,
*August* 21, 19—, 8.25 *a.m.*

1. The enemy are sending a convoy of stores from NEWINGTON to UPPER STANDEN, to proceed either by CHERITON HILL road or by the lower road through CHERITON TOWN.

2. I intend to intercept the convoy with my command,

*One squadron.*
*One battery.*
*One battalion.*
*Two sections M.I.*
*Half bearer co.*

as per margin, before it gets too close to its destination.

3. Cavalry will reconnoitre rapidly in all directions towards enemy, and when his route is fixed, must withdraw to operate on flanks. Half a troop to go with mounted infantry to occupy CÆSAR'S CAMP.

4. Artillery to occupy position commanding either road as may be necessary. Target, hostile infantry or convoy wagons.

5. Mounted infantry to advance to CÆSAR'S CAMP and hold it.

6. Infantry battalion will furnish one company to

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CHERITON HILL, to draw enemy's covering party if route is by upper road. Four companies to be placed in concealed position south of ELVINGTON—ARGROVE WOOD—TERLINGHAM, with two companies in reserve near GIBRALTAR. One section as escort to battery.

7. Bearer company will establish dressing-station at WHITEHALL, near PADDLESWORTH road.

8. I shall be with the infantry reserve.

(Sd.) T.,
MAJOR.

Copies handed personally to Commanding Officers.

MAJOR T. explained to the officers concerned that the infantry dispositions would be altered if the convoy took the lower road, and that the new positions would in such case be pointed out on the ground.

At 8.45 a.m. the troops marched off, MAJOR T. accompanying the infantry reserve. At 9.20 a.m., being then near GIBRALTAR, he received news simultaneously from his cavalry at CÆSAR'S CAMP and on the PEAN road. CÆSAR'S CAMP had been occupied by his force and the position held by dismounted men, the horses being well concealed. The enemy was reported to be marching the convoy on the upper road, having apparently left Newington at 9 a.m. The convoy was accompanied by cavalry, which formed a cordon round it, and it was not easy to get near the wagons.

MAJOR T.'s dispositions as first determined were now carried out. His idea was to conceal his positions so well that the Southern force which was advancing on the upper road should not know where the main force of their enemy

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was situated. This the ground enabled to be effectually carried out. Looking at the O. S. map, the 500 contour line runs along the front of ARGROVE WOOD and prolongs to the east with high hedges towards TERLINGHAM. A very good and extensive field of fire is open to the south; an artillery position is found on the 500 contour line; and a hedge fence (marked B. R. in map) runs due south from TERLINGHAM towards the RESERVOIR, behind which on the east side many riflemen could be posted facing west.

The reserves find good cover on the main road, and are concealed from an enemy advancing from west or south by hedges, farm buildings, and woods. If the attack develops, the guns could be moved by hand in a concealed cross-road well behind hedges, to a fresh position facing more to the west, south of TERLINGHAM.

Good ground for a counter attack also exists behind the spur on the left flank near bench mark 392 on the road in front of TERLINGHAM, S.S.E. of latter place.

Having decided to endeavour to draw the enemy's covering party with the view of intercepting the convoy on the CHERITON HILL or upper road, should it proceed without waiting until its covering escort had brushed aside or driven away the Northern Force, MAJOR T. requested the commander of the battalion to send the company of infantry named in the orders, to make a show or demonstration on the right flank of the position. No. 1 Company, named for this duty, was accordingly placed in a concealed position on the right flank, overlooking the road by which the convoy was expected. The commander of the company was named to MAJOR T. as a good

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fighting officer, and the duties required of him were explained personally by the COMMANDER of the Northern Force.

The commander of the infantry battalion placed the other companies as directed in the orders; Nos. 3, 4, 5, and 6 being posted in position, part in local reserve. No. 2 Company furnished a section to the artillery, the rest of the company joining the local reserve of the infantry in position. Nos. 7 and 8 Companies formed a general reserve near GIBRALTAR.

Whilst the infantry were moving into their places MAJOR T. received numerous reports from his cavalry, some of which were difficult to reconcile with others. The cavalry watching the convoy sent word that it appeared as if hesitating to proceed, and that it had not advanced more than half a mile in forty minutes. It appeared to have constantly halted, while the cavalry escort was exploring all the neighbourhood in what seemed an unnecessary manner. This went on till 9.46 a.m., when a message was received from cavalry which had passed to the southern side of the woods north of CHERITON TOWN, to the effect that troops were passing along the lower or southern road through CHERITON. A simultaneous message from cavalry watching the convoy on the upper road informed the COMMANDER that the movement on that road was a blind, and that no real convoy had left NEWINGTON for the upper road. A further report from CÆSAR'S CAMP showed that troops were approaching that position in strength from the south, and the commander of the mounted troops of the Red Force asked for reinforcements.

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Major T. now saw that he had been deceived, and immediately ordered the following changes in his dispositions to be made. The two companies, Nos. 7 and 8, of the Northern Force held in general reserve on the main road near the farm buildings at Gibraltar, by which they were concealed, were ordered to make at once for the top of Cæsar's Camp. Time being of the utmost importance, and the imperative necessity of reinforcing the mounted troops at the key of the position, Cæsar's Camp, urgent, these two companies, being nearest, were necessarily selected first of all. A road which ran downhill for the greater part of the three-quarters of a mile which had to be traversed afforded easy access. The companies were ordered to approach from the north side, where the concentric rows of ancient Roman trenches would enable them to advance in driblets and rushes up to the summit even in presence of the enemy, without the great loss which must have occurred had the slope been a smooth and even glacis. By doubling part of the way downhill, Major T. calculated they would reach the summit in a quarter of an hour from the time of their start from Gibraltar, which was at 9.50 a.m. The four companies of infantry lining the Argrove Wood—Terlingham line, Nos. 3, 4, 5, and 6, were sent same time to move stealthily to the spur which juts out immediately to the west of Folkestone Waterworks Reservoir, where three companies were ordered to lie down, hidden by folds in the ground at a distance of about 500 yards from the west side of Cæsar's Camp, ready for surprise firing if an assault was delivered on its defenders. The fourth company was to hold itself in local reserve under cover

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of the west back slope of the spur. Halfway down in the hollow formed by the contours between TERLINGHAM and the cross-roads, which latter are 300 yards from CÆSAR'S CAMP, a general reserve was formed, made up of the remaining company, No. 1, which had come on from CHERITON HILL, and the three-quarters of the company No. 2, which furnished escort for the guns.

The guns were directed to remain in their present position near GIBRALTAR, as it would not have been expedient to move them until it was ascertained from what direction and position the hostile artillery would open fire. Their commanding position dominated CÆSAR'S CAMP and the cross-roads to its north-west, being also on an equality of height with CHERITON and WINGATE HILLS. In case of the enemy being able to force the pass at CÆSAR'S CAMP, the guns of the Northern Force could not be in a better place for barring his progress. The cavalry not employed at CÆSAR'S CAMP were now directed to concentrate behind ARGROVE WOOD, to be ready for eventualities on the flanks.

The arrangements detailed were all completed, so far as the infantry were concerned, by 10 minutes past 10 a.m., and exactly at that hour the assault on CÆSAR'S CAMP was commenced by a strong force of Southern infantry, which appeared to envelop the southern part of the CAMP, and to be also working up on the east and west sides. The attack was supported by the fire of the southern artillery from WINGATE HILL.

The assailants were met by a determined resistance from the garrison of CÆSAR'S CAMP, being dismounted men of cavalry and mounted infantry, and the two Companies,



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Nos. 7 and 8, of infantry, which had just reached the summit. The surprise fire from the concealed infantry on the west spur was now an important element in the defence, and the fire of the assailants soon slackened; nor did the latter derive much assistance from their guns at WINGATE HILL, which were immediately engaged in an artillery duel with the Northern artillery at GIBRALTAR.

### *General Narrative.*

The situation on both sides was now rapidly approaching a crisis. The movement of the Southern Force guns to an excellent position on the flank, from which much was expected, turned out to be ineffective, as the Northern Force artillery, already in position at GIBRALTAR, was easily brought to bear on the new-comers, and effectually neutralized their action. The defenders of CÆSAR'S CAMP were reinforced by the fresh troops sent by Major T. just in sufficient time to meet the attack of the Southern Force. The defenders, well posted as they were, in a very short time proved too strong for the assailants, who encountered such evident losses that after a short engagement the "Cease fire" was sounded by order of the UMPIRES, just as Major T. was ordering his general reserve from the hollow north of CÆSAR'S CAMP to make a counter attack upon the Blue troops.

### *Summing up.*

The CHIEF UMPIRE, having assembled the OFFICERS in COMMAND of forces and of units, as well as the UMPIRES attached to each side, at the WATERWORKS, called for

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statements from the COMMANDERS and from the UMPIRES as to what had occurred. He then addressed the Officers, and said that in his opinion both combatants had exercised much skill in endeavouring to outwit one another; that both had displayed a fair grasp of the situation, and also a knowledge of the country in which they operated. The Southern or Blue Force COMMANDER had done well to send his artillery to WINGATE HILL, the only feasible position available which commanded CÆSAR'S CAMP, and as time was of the greatest importance, a mounted escort was eminently suitable for the guns. At the same time it appeared that the Northern or Red Force artillery were also judiciously handled, especially in not being moved from their excellent position at GIBRALTAR when the change of plan was rendered necessary at 9.50.

The information sent back by the cavalry on both sides proved exceptionally correct, which was not always the case, great difficulty being now experienced in getting sufficient intelligence, owing to the cunning necessarily exhibited during the preliminary fencing which takes place in the endeavour to find out the dispositions of the opposing side. No one could blame the Red cavalry for being deceived by the false convoy.

The COMMANDER of the Blue or Southern Force was placed in a difficult position at 9.50, when he had to make up his mind as to what he would do with regard to forcing the pass at CÆSAR'S CAMP. He had to make a rapid calculation of chances, and he decided to attack as soon as his guns could help him, no doubt believing that his opponent's troops were too much committed to another

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course of action to be available as reinforcement to the weak CÆSAR'S CAMP garrison.

Circumstances proved too strong for him, and he found the defence too powerful. Perhaps it would have been better had he waited for fuller information. Much would, however, depend upon his instructions, and if it was imperative upon him to push his convoy on at all risks to UPPER STANDEN. The COMMANDER of the Red or Northern Force had similarly to come to a rapid decision at 9.46, as to how he could meet the changed conditions. The course of events shows that he was not backward in his dispositions, which effectually carried out his purpose.

The mounted infantry on both sides were well handled and disposed. The infantry also worked carefully, and showed what could be done in the way of concealing themselves in a fairly open country, by advancing in very small groups and detachments, avoiding to offer targets to the enemy by taking every advantage of cover, both natural and artificial. For this the officers in charge of the infantry companies deserved to be commended.

On the whole, the CHIEF UMPIRE considered a most instructive action had been worked out with the small forces engaged.

### *Comments.*

This study seems to offer a good example of the telling advantage derived from acting on interior lines, given equal forces and equally skilled COMMANDERS, and also of the great value of an intimate knowledge of the country, and therefore of the positions on a convoy route which

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offer the best opportunities of attack and defence. Red, on this occasion, could move his troops to threatened spots more quickly than Blue, who also had to move his force uphill on his route whichever way he came. Red could see from his commanding position what Blue was about, much more easily than Blue could make out the Red dispositions. There is also shown the vast importance in the actual field, when forces are in close proximity, of early, accurate, and ample information to be furnished by cavalry. The information to be obtained beforehand in war by means of spies and secret intelligence, as to the strength and arrangements of the enemy, is not easily represented in peace operations, but it should not be forgotten that this forms an important element in time of war.

The uses of mounted infantry, also, both for seizing tactical points rapidly so as to forestall the enemy, and also as escort for a rapid movement of artillery if required, are well exemplified in this study.

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# G.

## TACTICAL OPERATION AT SHORNCLIFFE.

(*See Maps* 3, 4.)

ADVANCED GUARD *v.* ADVANCED GUARD.

*February* 20, 19—.

THE General and Special Ideas of this scheme have been set by an officer well acquainted with the country over which the operations are supposed to take place. The problem has been carefully worked out, after the fashion of the war game, but with constant reference to the ground. The scene of the movements being quite close to the CAMP, an accessible and realistic study is presented to officers of all ranks stationed at SHORNCLIFFE. The scheme can be taken to the actual ground, and the topographical features involved can be carefully noted and compared with the map, while the narrative of the movements is followed step by step.

### *General Idea.*

An Eastern invading force landed near Dover is advancing *viâ* SANDGATE to join a friendly force at DUNGENESS. A Western defending force based on RUCKINGE is advancing to oppose it.

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*Special Idea. Western Force (Red).*

An advanced guard, consisting of a squadron of cavalry, a battery of field artillery, two battalions of infantry with machine guns, and a half bearer company, has arrived at SALTWOOD, where the COMMANDER receives the following order :—

"From O. Cg. 1st Division, RUCKINGE,
To O. Cg. Adv. Guard, SALTWOOD, 5.30 a.m.

"I hear that a small force of the enemy is advancing from DOVER on SANDGATE and HYTHE. Reconnoitre in the enemy's direction, attack him, and drive him back. I will support you later in the day."

*Special Idea. Eastern Force (Blue).*

An advanced guard, formed of a squadron of cavalry, a battery of field artillery, two battalions of infantry with machine guns, and a half bearer company, has reached the vicinity of FOLKESTONE, where the COMMANDER receives the following order :—

"From O. Cg. VII. Army Corps, DOVER,
To O. Cg. Adv. Guard, FOLKESTONE, 5.30 a.m.

"I am informed that an advanced guard of the enemy is advancing by SALTWOOD on the CAMP at SHORNCLIFFE. Take up the best position you can to delay the advance of this force, and hold on to the ground to the utmost of your power, until I can come to your assistance."

Boundaries :—The Government area; on the south the

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HYTHE-SANDGATE road. No troops to advance till 9 a.m. MAJOR G. to command the Western Force; MAJOR K. to command the Eastern Force.

Topographical Hints:—Taking SHORNCLIFFE as a centre, DOVER lies 9 miles to the E.N.E. along the coast, DUNGENESS is 15 miles S.S.W. as the crow flies. RUCKINGE is 10 miles W., SALTWOOD is $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles W.

### *Narrative. Western Force (Red).*

A copy of the General Idea and of the Special Idea Western Force having been handed to MAJOR G. by an ASSISTANT UMPIRE at the place of rendezvous, SALTWOOD, at 8.30 a.m. on February 20, the COMMANDER of the Western Force proceeded to consider the problem submitted to him. Establishing himself at a table in the bar parlour of the CASTLE HOTEL, he spread out his maps before him, at the same time requesting the OFFICER appointed to act on his staff to see that the troops allotted to his command were all present in sufficient time to commence operations punctually at 9 a.m.

The COMMANDER saw that until he received some definite information from his cavalry, it would be impossible to do more than move off the rest of his force in the general direction of the enemy, and therefore but few preliminary orders would require to be issued. The enemy might be quite near or some way off, and until he was reported upon it was not possible to say whether he would be found in front, on the left, or on the right. It was not known at what hour the enemy had started from DOVER, a distance of about 11 miles from HYTHE. It would perhaps on the

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whole be safest to assume that the enemy was not far off, and act in accordance with that presumption.

MAJOR G. had been previously stationed at SHORNCLIFFE, and knew the country well over which he was about to manœuvre; this should give him an advantage over his enemy, who was supposed to have only just landed, and to be a stranger to the country. By the use of good maps, however, it was likely that the enemy had arrived at a fixed conclusion as to the best position for occupation in case it should be necessary for him to make a stand. MAJOR G. must not allow himself to be forestalled in any such position if he wished to occupy it himself, but should the enemy desire to post himself immediately west of SHORNCLIFFE CAMP, it might be well to let him do so, as the COMMANDER of the Western Force, knowing the country well, could place his guns in a favourable position for attack, and he also would be able to lead his troops for a concealed turning movement through a close bit of country on the enemy's right. He also knew of a good position facing east on the east side of the CAMP, and should the enemy be not found before the DOWNS were reached, the Western force might have to take up a blocking position there, and compel the Eastern Force to attack. In any case, time being very precious, it became necessary to write out at once the preliminary "operation orders," assuming the enemy to be in the near vicinity.

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**Advanced Guard Orders; by O. Cg. Western Force (Red).**

No. 1. SALTWOOD,
To Os. Cg. Units. *February* 20, 19—, 8.45 *a.m.*

1. Enemy is reported to be advancing rapidly.

2. I mean to drive him back on DOVER, with the force under my command as per margin. Our main force at RUCKINGE will support us.

*One squadron.*
*One battery.*
*Two battalions.*
*Half bearer co.*

3. Cavalry will reconnoitre to front and flanks. Two troops to proceed rapidly to POINT 263 on map near WHITENBROOK WOOD, and hold the post dismounted until relieved by infantry.

4. Infantry will advance in an easterly direction, 1st Provisional Battalion leading, headed by a line of scouts. Extended order will be assumed by the company next to the scouts, the remaining companies being in lines of small columns. 3rd Royal Sussex Regiment will follow in a line of company columns. This battalion will furnish one company as escort for artillery. Machine guns will accompany battalions.

5. Artillery will take up preliminary position to cover advance on hill half a mile N.E. of SALTWOOD PUMPING STATION; moving to more advanced positions as circumstances may require.

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6. The troops will move forward at 9 a.m. Bearer company will not proceed beyond SALTWOOD CASTLE.

7. I shall be with the rear battalion.

(Sd.) G.,
MAJOR.

Issued in writing personally.

At 9 a.m. the Western Force was put in motion. The cavalry started off at a canter, and the leading company, No. 1, of the Provisional Battalion, preceded by the scouts in front, extended in single rank to intervals of 5 paces, the whole company being thus deployed. Having allowed the scouts, who were furnished by the different companies under an officer specially selected, to get 600 yards in advance, the company followed, and being strong it covered a broad frontage of about 300 yards, allowing for the deduction of its scouts, who formed part of those in the extreme front. The skirmishers carefully avoided showing themselves unnecessarily as they advanced, not crowding together at any points, so that the grouping might attract the enemy's attention should his scouts be within view. About 300 yards behind the leading company, Nos. 2 and 3 Companies followed in a line of sections in fours at 50 paces' intervals. Nos. 4 and 5 Companies were in similar formation at the same distance; Nos. 6, 7, and 8 Companies forming a further line of sections in fours at 30 paces' intervals. The Royal Sussex Battalion brought up the rear in a line of company columns of sections.

The route followed was by SALTWOOD CASTLE as far as the open space between ORCHARD FIELD SHAW and BLACKHOUSE SHAW, which they reached at 9.12 a.m. Here a

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pause of a few minutes was made to see if any fresh orders were coming from the COMMANDER, who was with the rear battalion.

No news having yet been obtained of the enemy, the advance was cautiously continued at 9.15 a.m. The scouts now held back until the skirmishers of No. 1 Company were within 200 yards, as the country was becoming closer. Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5 Companies successively formed lines of skirmishers on reaching BLACKHOUSE HILL, and other companies of the leading battalion followed suit on attaining the same point. The rear battalion, however, retained its line of columns, and on arriving at BLACKHOUSE HILL took shelter behind the hill and awaited further orders in this formation.

The other companies in advance continued to move forward, preceded by the scouts at 200 yards' distance, through COLD HARBOUR and past the ASH PLANTATION, taking every advantage of the slopes of the ground, for they were anxious to avoid showing up should the enemy's cavalry be on the watch.

At 9.25 a.m. information was brought to MAJOR G., who had now come up to BLACKHOUSE HILL, to the effect that the two troops Western cavalry had seized POINT 263 near WHITENBROOK WOOD without opposition. At the same time he heard that some of the enemy's cavalry had been seen on the 200 contour line north-east of SANDGATE RAILWAY STATION, overlooking the SEABROOK STREAM VALLEY, peering out as if seeking information. Also that cavalry scouts of the Western Force, who had got through the PARAKER WOOD on the bridle road, reported having been able to note unobserved the presence of hostile scouts on

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the far side of the HORN STREET VALLEY. The COMMANDER was further informed that a cavalry patrol of the Eastern Force was at the cross-roads at SEABROOK, where the stream joins the ROYAL MILITARY CANAL.

At 9.30 positive news arrived of the enemy's cavalry having occupied the spur north-east of SANDGATE RAILWAY STATION, and that they had dismounted for that purpose. MAJOR G. thought this indicated a decided intention on part of the enemy to advance and hold the PLATEAU overlooking the SEABROOK VALLEY, of which the spur occupied would form the left flank if the position were taken up.

He now decided to bring up his artillery from their retired post near SALTWOOD PUMPING STATION, and then to await further news of the enemy's intentions. He sent out the following order :—

**Artillery Order; by O. Cg. Western Force (Red).**

No. 1. BLACKHOUSE HILL,
To O. Cg. Artillery. *February* 20, 19—, 9.30 *a.m.*

Move up your guns to the GOLF COURSE,[1] and place them so as best to command the western face of SHORNCLIFFE CAMP.

(Sd.) G.,
MAJOR.

In writing by cyclist.

At 9.40 the cavalry reported that they had pushed their way up the western slopes of the CAMP PLATEAU by

[1] As a matter of fact, these guns were only theoretically placed on the GOLF COURSE, infantry troops being alone allowed there. They had to be brought into action at a point a little further back, about 300 yards N.W. of SCENE FARM. In actual warfare they would have been placed on the GOLF COURSE as being by far the best position.

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SEABROOK VALE, and although they could not as yet sight any infantry, they noted a cloud of dust on the eastern side of the CAMP, denoting the march of men and also of vehicles (guns or wagons) moving west. It was now quite clear what the enemy intended to do, so MAJOR G. at once issued the following further orders :—

**Advanced Guard Orders ; by O. Cg. Western Force (Red).**

No. 2. BLACKHOUSE HILL,
To Os. Cg. Units. *February* 20, 19—, 9.40 *a.m.*

1. The O. Cg. Provisional Battalion will tell off his four rearmost companies to hold DIBGATE FARM position. The remaining companies will continue to advance till the leading company closes on the line of scouts at the E. border of PARAKER and CASEBOURNE WOODS.

2. The Sussex Battalion will keep in reserve at SCENE FARM, but will detach one company to relieve cavalry at POINT 263. The O. Cg. Sussex Battalion will have both machine guns under his command.

3. Cavalry will operate on left flank as opportunity offers, when its scouts are withdrawn and detachment at POINT 263 relieved by infantry.

4. I shall be at SCENE FARM.

(Sd.) G.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing, and copy sent to cavalry by orderly.

A special messenger was also sent to the bearer company with orders to move up to BLACKHOUSE HILL.

By 9.50 a.m. the line of groups of infantry scouts, which

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had been moving quietly forward, reached the eastern borders of PARAKER and CASEBOURNE WOODS overlooking SEABROOK VALLEY. The leading company of skirmishers presently closed on the scouts; some of them were more in advance than others, but all were in touch with their leaders, and both scouts and skirmishers joined together in occupying the border of the woods.

By the same hour the Sussex company, No. 8, sent to POINT 263, had relieved the cavalry and commenced to entrench themselves. The cavalry detachment had already marked out the ground for the purpose, and had commenced to dig, but having only two picks and two spades of pioneers' equipment with them, they had not made much progress.

At 9.55 the infantry skirmishers and scouts at the eastern border of PARAKER WOOD commenced to fire at an enemy visible on the opposite side of the valley. At the same time No. 8 Company at POINT 263 came under rifle fire from a place near the ROMAN CATHOLIC CHAPEL, at a range of about 1200 yards.

By 10 a.m. the COMMANDER of the Western Force had still no information from his cavalry as to the strength of the force which seemed to be in front of him, nor did he know how far to the north their position extended. At 5 minutes past 10, however, a cavalry patrol came in, which reported that there were certainly no hostile troops near or about ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, and on further questioning the men did not believe the position extended in a northerly direction beyond the limits of the CAMP.

Although MAJOR G. did not know the exact strength of the force opposed to him, the Special Idea had named it as

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a small force, and therefore he did not hesitate to come to close quarters and endeavour to drive it back. He determined to tie the enemy to his position by holding him on the left flank, which the Western Force entrenched position on its own right flank would help to effect, aided by fire from the battery at the GOLF COURSE. He would then demonstrate on the enemy's centre, and turn him on his right by a movement through the wooded country on that flank. Orders to carry this out were accordingly issued.

**Attack Orders; by O. Cg. Western Force (Red).**

No. 3. SCENE FARM,
To Os. Cg. Units. *February* 20, 19—, 10.5 *a.m.*

1. The enemy is in position on opposite heights.

2. I intend to hold him on his left, to attack his centre, and also to turn and attack his right.

3. The Provisional Battalion now on DIBGATE PLATEAU will form the advanced portion of the troops for attack of enemy's right flank. Four companies of Sussex Battalion now at SCENE FARM will follow as general reserve.

4. Two companies of Sussex Battalion will make the centre attack. Remaining companies of this battalion as before.

5. The machine guns will be established in a hidden position at south-east corner of PARAKER WOOD.

6. A dressing-station will be fixed W. of SCENE FARM, near the main road.

7. I shall be at SCENE FARM.

(Sd.) G.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

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MAJOR G. further represented to the officers concerned that the troops for flank attack would be conducted by covered routes through UNDERHILL and by the RECTORY, as also from the border of PARAKER WOOD, until they got round the enemy's flank. Meantime the attention of the hostile force would be engaged on its left flank by the Western company at POINT 263 opening fire from behind its entrenchment, and by the Western artillery, which would now direct its fire on the same target. The remaining two companies of the Sussex Battalion would make a strong demonstration by attacking the central spur of the enemy's position. One company would threaten to attack, first of all, advancing by covered approaches south of SEABROOK VALE, with the other company in reserve at the south-east corner of PARAKER WOOD, where would also be hidden the two machine guns of the Western Force.

It was further explained that the artillery would not advance, but would act effectively from the position on the GOLF COURSE to hold the enemy on his left flank.

The cavalry would work round by ST. MARTIN'S PLAIN on the enemy's right flank. Notice of the foregoing arrangements were sent by cyclist messenger to the officer commanding the squadron.

### *Narrative. Eastern Force (Blue).*

MAJOR K., commanding the Eastern Force, was handed a copy of the General Idea, and also one of the Special Idea[1] for the Eastern Force, at the rendezvous at 8.30 a.m.,

[1] For Special Idea Eastern Force, see page 119.



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February 20. The place of assembly was on the high ground overlooking the lifeboat house at FOLKESTONE.

MAJOR K. got under temporary cover, and consulted his map of the country, his STAFF OFFICER meantime seeing that the troops allotted to the exercise arrived in good time, and were suitably disposed so as to be able to move off at 9 a.m. The force was composed of one squadron of cavalry, one battery of field artillery, and two battalions (Fusiliers and Rifles) of infantry, with a half bearer company added.

MAJOR K. looked at his map for the best position to take up between FOLKESTONE and SALTWOOD, and saw several which he mentally compared one with the other, in regard to their distance from his starting-point, accessibility, and capacities for defence. He decided in favour of the position overlooking SEABROOK STREAM and HORN STREET VALLEY, and hoped he might be able to reach it before his adversary. He had, however, to arrange matters also to meet the possibility of the enemy having got the start of him, and in such a case he must be prepared to occupy the nearest position of all between FOLKESTONE and SANDGATE. In any case his dispositions would depend on the information he received from his cavalry.

At 8.45 a.m. he issued the following "operation orders:"—

**Advanced Guard Orders; by O. Cg. Eastern Force (Blue).**

No. 1. FOLKESTONE,
To Os. Cg. Units. *February* 20, 19—, 8.45 *a.m.*

1. Enemy reported advancing on SHORNCLIFFE CAMP from SALTWOOD.

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2. Our main force is completing disembarkation, and will support us later in the day.

3. I intend to advance and block the enemy with my command as per margin, for which purpose the advanced guard will move forward at 9 a.m.

*One squadron.*
*One battery.*
*Two battalions.*
*Half bearer co.*

4. Cavalry will reconnoitre towards SANDGATE and SALTWOOD, letting me know of enemy's presence. Two troops to seize SPUR on CONTOUR 200, about 300 yards N.E. of SANDGATE STATION, and hold the post till relieved by infantry.

5. Artillery will take up suitable position to cover infantry, moving to more forward positions as may be required.

6. Infantry will advance upon SHORNCLIFFE, Fusilier battalion leading, with first two companies in skirmishing order, covered by scouts. Remainder of battalion to follow in lines of small columns, moving by most covered routes till high ground is reached, when skirmishing formations will be adopted. The Rifle battalion will send one company as escort for guns. The rest of battalion will follow the Fusiliers in a line of small columns at a suitable distance.

7. Bearer company will follow the infantry.

8. I shall be with the Rifles.

(Sd.) K.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

At 9 a.m. the Eastern Force is set in motion. The

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cavalry advance quickly towards SHORNCLIFFE, an officer's patrol following the lower road through SANDGATE, and another patrol by the esplanade towards and through the CAMP. The patrol on lower road, when near SANDGATE STATION, sees hostile cavalry at the SEABROOK VALLEY, and also on the hill near WHITENBROOK WOOD. News of this is at once sent back to the COMMANDER of the Eastern Force.

As the Fusilier companies, which are in lines of small columns, reach the open and high ground west of the town of FOLKESTONE, they also form lines of skirmishers. By 9.20 a.m. the leading line, consisting of Nos. 1 and 2 Companies, has reached the position east of SHORNCLIFFE CAMP, approaching stealthily, the scouts being about 300 yards ahead. News is brought by the cavalry that the CAMP is clear of the enemy. The COMMANDER sends an order for the scouts to move on freely, the leading skirmishing line to be halted till there is a distance of quite half a mile, and then to follow as before. He himself moves up to the COTTAGE which is on the eastern verge of the CAMP.

At 9.25 a.m. he hears that his cavalry have seized the SPUR on 200 CONTOUR above SANDGATE STATION, and occupied it with dismounted men; also that the enemy's cavalry have been sighted again at POINT 263, near WHITENBROOK WOOD, and at ST. MARTIN'S PLAIN, but that none of the hostile infantry have as yet been observed.

MAJOR K. now decides definitely to take post at the heights overlooking SEABROOK—HORN STREET VALLEY, the left flank of which his cavalry have secured. He thinks he can hold on well to this position, and will do so "to the

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utmost" of his power as his instructions require; nor will he easily be dislodged from it by his opponent.

He accordingly issues further orders as follows :—

**Defence Orders; by O. Cg. Eastern Force (Blue).**

No. 2. THE COTTAGE,
To Os. Cg. Units. *February* 20, 19—, 9.30 *a.m.*

1. I am about to take up a defensive position on the west side of the CAMP, facing west.

2. Infantry will form on the line ROMAN CATHOLIC CHAPEL—GARRISON CHURCH—A. S. CORPS BARRACKS, the Fusiliers on the left (relieving cavalry post) and centre, having two companies as local reserves. The Rifles will hold the right with three companies, one being held back as local reserve. Four companies of the Rifles will form a general reserve at the R.E. BARRACKS.

3. Artillery will take post on SPUR N.E. of SANDGATE STATION, near ROMAN CATHOLIC CHAPEL. The company of Rifles acting as escort will be on the extreme left of the line, under cover, as far forward as possible.

4. Machine guns, acting together, will be posted in a masked position just in rear of the centre of line.

5. A dressing-station will be formed on the LEAS near the upper FOLKESTONE road.

6. I shall be with the artillery.

(Sd.) K.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing, and copy to bearer company by cyclist.

An additional order was also despatched to the O. C;

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cavalry to collect his squadron for use on the right flank, after his scouts were drawn in.

By 9.50 a.m. the dispositions had all been carried out, and with undoubted success, so far as concealment of movements was concerned. But in one case, after the line was formed, some of the infantry, in moving from one spur to another, showed themselves unguardedly, and were fired at from the corner of PARAKER WOOD. This occurred at 9.55 a.m. At the same hour the company on left of the Eastern Force, seeing infantry entrenching at POINT 263 on the opposite side of the valley, opened fire upon them at about 1200 yards' range.

The artillery of the Blue Force, however, which was well posted near the ROMAN CATHOLIC CHAPEL, so as not to easily come under observation from the enemy's side, did not join in the fire, being directed to reserve itself for future eventualities.

By 10 a.m. it was evident to the COMMANDER of the Blue Force, both from the reports of his scouts and from his own observations, that the enemy occupied a concealed position on the other side of the valley, the right of which rested on POINT 263, and the left of which certainly extended as far as CASEBOURNE WOOD.

### *General Narrative.*

While the Western Force was getting its infantry into position for the attack on the right flank of the Eastern Force, and was pressing on under cover, the Eastern troops, suspecting some movement of this kind, opened fire, beginning with the extreme right, upon a few of the

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Western infantry seen in the close ground about the Rectory, and on some of the Sussex men, who showed themselves prematurely at the border of Paraker Wood. The company of the Western Force at the Hill 263 immediately commenced to fire upon the Spur at Roman Catholic Chapel held by the left of the Eastern Force troops, infantry and artillery. The Eastern Force of both arms replied, and upon the Blue battery showing its position, the Western battery at the Golf Course came into action, and fired upon the Eastern battery.

It was close upon half-past 10 o'clock when the flank attack of the Western Force began to be vigorously pushed, and at the same time the company stationed at the south-eastern corner of Paraker Wood boldly advanced by Seabrook Vale, against the Centre Spur of the 200 Contour in the Eastern Force position. The company took every advantage of cover which was afforded by cross-roads with banks, fences, and houses, in order to move up from one obstacle to another and get within telling distance of the object. They lost heavily, but certainly succeeded in holding down the enemy to their position at this part of the engagement.

After about ten minutes, however, the Eastern troops got impatient, and, making a counter attack with one of the local reserve Fusilier companies, drove their assailants right back to Paraker Wood. Here the Eastern troops, following up, were easily drawn under the fire of the Sussex company in reserve, which had been left in the wood, and also were suddenly brought under a hail of bullets from the two machine guns stationed just at the border of the wood. The Eastern company had to beat

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a hasty retreat, leaving a large proportion of its strength behind it.

A similar experience was undergone by the Western Force in their flank attack. They were progressing fairly well, and doubling up the right flank of the Eastern Force, when two machine guns of the latter unmasked themselves from behind some buildings and caused great damage to the assailants, who just at this point had necessarily to cross some open ground. More troops on the Western side were, however, brought up, and the machine guns were rushed and silenced.

The attack of the Western Force on this flank now became irresistible, and would, no doubt, have carried everything before it, had not the "Cease fire" sounded at a few minutes before 11 o'clock.

### *Summing up.*

On the officers assembling, the CHIEF UMPIRE heard statements and opinions of the ASSISTANT UMPIRES, which were rather sparingly given. He then asked the OFFICER in charge of the Western Force to state his case, and to say whether he had been well served by the troops working with him.

The OFFICER COMMANDING the Red Force said he found it difficult to obtain information as to the strength of the enemy early enough and in sufficient detail to be of much practical use, the enemy being in most cases very craftily concealed. In one or two places, however, his cavalry had shown themselves, and from this and the scanty information received it was possible, by putting two and two together, to

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infer the position of the Blue main force. The facts were, however, few on which a correct diagnosis of the enemy's plans could be based, and he had to guess from the light of previous experiences what was likely to happen. He did not see how it could be otherwise in such a close country as this. He could not use his artillery as effectively as he could have wished. This was partly due to the concealment practised by the enemy, and partly owing to the country. As the GOLF COURSE was out of bounds for artillery, he had to take up a more retired position with a restricted field of fire and view, about 300 yards north-west of SCENE FARM, whereas he would certainly otherwise have selected the GOLF COURSE, in order to keep the left of the Eastern Force closely engaged, whilst its right was being turned by the Western Force, thus preventing the reinforcement at the point of infantry attack by troops from the left of the Eastern position. On the other hand, he knew that even with his guns on the GOLF LINKS he must lose a certain amount of artillery support at the point of attack, but he did not consider this of such importance as the concentration of fire upon the enemy's left. He might do without the former; he could not do without the latter. He had rather anticipated the idea of a counter attack when he demonstrated against the enemy's centre, and kept his machine guns in hiding for the purpose of meeting such an attack; the enemy had fortunately been led into this course, and enabled the Western Force to score. He did not, however, expect the machine guns of the Eastern Force would have checked his flank attack in the way they had done, being unaware of their presence with the force. He thought on the whole

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that the enemy would have been driven back to DOVER by his troops.

The OFFICER COMMANDING the Blue Force, on being called upon, said he had nothing particular to put forward, but thought he would have repulsed the Western Force if the action had proceeded. His position was the best to take up in the time at his disposal, and was very strong, even after being turned on the right. He could easily, if necessary, have fallen back and fought a rear-guard action in the CAMP, when he could have punished Red in the pursuit. He did not expect the sudden unmasking of the Red machine guns at PARAKER WOOD. If he had known they were there, he would have sent on his own Maxims to meet them.

The CHIEF UMPIRE summed up by saying that tactics was by no means an exact science, and that the conduct of a single individual had been before now sufficient to change the fortunes of the day; he therefore could not say with absolute certainty how the operations would have terminated, but he inclined to the opinion that the Eastern Force would have had to vacate their position. Owing to the greater weight of the Red Force being applied against a much lighter force on a flank, the defending force were unable to change their front to resist the attack, being tied down to their original line of defence by the tactics of the Red Commander. He gave the COMMANDER of the Western Force credit for this. He also considered that the Red guns should be counted as being on the GOLF LINKS, from which position they could be employed with great advantage in holding the enemy on his left flank, although their field of fire was limited as regards the attack on the right flank of the Blue Force.

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A correct use of the various arms had been aimed at by both COMMANDERS, and each had tried to carry out faithfully the Special Idea embodying the instructions of their superiors. He did not consider the occasion what might be called an "artillery day," but rather one which well exemplified the tactics of infantry and of machine guns.

*Comments.*

This action illustrates the fact very strongly that positions have to be taken as found to exist, and made the best of, in this case to the advantage of the attackers. If the Red Force had taken up a defensive position on DIBGATE PLATEAU and woods, and waited to be attacked, its left would have been in danger of being turned by the Blue Force, in the same way as the right of the Eastern Force was actually turned by the Western Force. Again, on the energy displayed in the false frontal attack or demonstration, as related in this narrative, depends to a great extent the weight or number of troops which can be spared to operate in the turning movement. If the frontal attack be pushed boldly, losses must occur, but more of the defending line are thereby detained to offer resistance than if the feint be only half-heartedly made, and this is all in favour of the assailants' flank attack simultaneously conducted. In the case of joint attacks on front and flanks, the movements should be carefully timed, to ensure harmonious co-operation and increased weight of fire on the threatened points.

The use of machine guns as surprise weapons suddenly unmasked during the latter stages of a fight, is here also well brought out, their moral as well as their physical

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effect, at critical moments, against infantry more or less exhausted, being considerable. The withholding of useless artillery fire against troops in extended order or in concealed and entrenched positions deserves notice, as well as the careful avoidance by the Western Force of a re-entrant for the place of attack in the centre of the enemy's position.

It is, moreover, noteworthy in this affair that neither side knew the strength of their opponents, but each side had instructions which made an action inevitable. Risks must be run in war before definite results are obtained, and it has been said that in such undertakings Providence favours the big battalions; there is also undoubtedly a protecting influence which supports the leader who assumes the bold initiative, even without overwhelming strength, when the movement is based on sound military principles.

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# H.

## TACTICAL OPERATION AT SHORNCLIFFE.

(*See Maps* 3, 4.)

ATTACK AND DEFENCE OF POSITION.

*February* 9, 19—.

THE General and Special Ideas of this scheme have been set by an officer well acquainted with the country in vicinity of SHORNCLIFFE. The exercise has been carefully worked out in the first place as a war game, and then again on the ground with constant reference to the topographical conditions involved in the movements described. Officers of all ranks stationed at SHORNCLIFFE might follow the operations on the actual terrain with interest. They would find it a useful study. Those at distant stations may also, it is hoped, find it possible to place the troops on the map, and work out the movements in a satisfactory manner.

### *General Idea.*

An Eastern invading force, disembarked at DOVER, is advancing on ASHFORD.

A Western defending force is moving from ASHFORD to oppose it.

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*Special Idea. Eastern Force (Blue).*

"From G.O. Cg. VII. Army Corps, DOVER.
To O. Cg. Detached Force, FOLKESTONE. *Feby.* 9, 19—, 7 *a.m.*

"I hear the enemy are advancing and have a small force near SANDLING PARK JUNCTION. Advance to seize the JUNCTION, driving the enemy back wherever you find him."

*Special Idea. Western Force (Red).*

"From G.O. Cg. 1st Division II. Army Corps, CANTERBURY.
To O. Cg. Detached Force, SANDLING PARK." *Feby.* 7, 19—, 5.30 *a.m.*

"The enemy are reported to have landed, and are moving forward a small force from FOLKESTONE, it is said with intent to seize SANDLING PARK JUNCTION. Advance and stop the enemy."

N.B.—The Eastern Force (Blue), consisting of two battalions of infantry, one squadron of cavalry, two sections of mounted infantry, and one battery of field artillery, with a half-bearer company, to rendezvous at FOLKESTONE PIER STATION at 8.45 a.m.

The Western Force (Red), consisting of one battalion of infantry, one squadron of cavalry, two sections of mounted infantry, and one battery of field artillery, with a half bearer company, to rendezvous at SANDLING PARK at 8.45 a.m.

Boundaries:—Government Ground. No troops to leave either rendezvous until 9 a.m. The railway from SANDLING to FOLKESTONE is broken up and not to be considered available. MAJOR Q. to command the Eastern Force, MAJOR R. the Western Force.

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Topographical Hints :—Taking SHORNCLIFFE as a centre, DOVER lies about 9 miles E.N.E. ; CANTERBURY, as the crow flies, is 14 miles just W. of N. ; ASHFORD is 12 miles W.N.W. ; FOLKESTONE PIER is 2 miles E. ; SANDLING PARK JUNCTION is 3 miles N.N.W.

*Narrative. Eastern Force (Blue).*

At 8.30 a.m. the General Idea and also the Special Idea for the Eastern Force were handed to MAJOR Q. at FOLKESTONE PIER STATION. He spoke a few words to his STAFF OFFICER relative to the assembling of the force in the most convenient position on its arrival, and then took his papers and maps into the nearest room, and secured a table on which to lay them out. He had carefully studied the ground as shown by maps before this occasion, but had no personal knowledge of it. Judging from the maps, however, he saw that he could either move by the high-road or by the lower road to SHORNCLIFFE, but he did not like the look of the lower road, commanded as it was by the higher ground on its north side. One or two nasty places showed themselves where a force on the sea road might be at a disadvantage. He therefore preferred to take the upper road through SHORNCLIFFE CAMP, keeping as much as possible to the high ground. Just beyond the CAMP he perceived on the map an obstacle in the shape of the HORN STREET VALLEY. There would also be a stream to cross, the upper part of which did not look formidable in the hollow between ST. MARTIN'S PLAIN and DIBGATE PLATEAU. The stream was also crossed by small bridges in the valley.

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If he had to fight for the DIBGATE PLATEAU, he hoped to turn the left flank of the enemy up the hollow south-east of BARGROVE, concealing false attacks through CASEBOURNE and PARAKER WOODS, the close country favouring him by hiding his strength, and then drive the western troops off his line of advance.

If he could get round by BARGROVE, the next position did not look a very obstructive one, viz. the 300-feet contour position north of HYTHE WATERWORKS PUMPING STATION, near SALTWOOD, for he could attack it through woods, and get up to decisive ranges under cover to a great extent.

He saw a good place for his mounted infantry on the CENTRAL SPUR 200-feet contour line, near where the GARRISON CHURCH is situated on the west of SHORNCLIFFE CAMP, to guard and watch his left flank; and also three artillery positions which he could choose from—one on his right near ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, one on his left near the ROMAN CATHOLIC CHAPEL, and a central one just above HORN STREET. As he meant to put out strength in his right infantry attack, he thought he would select the first of the artillery positions, that near ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH; it being, moreover, a place where the guns could be more or less hidden. He had also been given information about another advanced artillery position, and had it marked on his map. This was on the 300-feet contour plateau, two or three hundred yards north-west of SCENE FARM. As the fight progressed this position might perhaps be occupied.

It was now time for him to take some action, so at 8.45 a.m. he assembled the Os. Cg. Units and verbally explained to them his plans. He then handed each a copy

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of the following "operation orders," which were written in a memo-book furnishing four copies at once :—

**Detached Force Orders; by Major Q. (Blue).**

No. 1. FOLKESTONE PIER STATION,
To Os. Cg. Units. *February* 9, 19—, 8.45 *a.m.*

1. Enemy reported to be near SANDLING PARK JUNCTION, and advancing.

2. Our army is disembarking as quickly as possible.

3. I intend to seize SANDLING PARK JUNCTION with my command, as per margin, driving the enemy back if I meet him.

*One squadron.*
*One battery F.A.*
*Two battalions.*
*Two sections M.I.*
*Half bearer co.*

4. Cavalry will reconnoitre to front and flanks, and report on enemy. Afterwards will concentrate on right or left flank as may be ordered.

5. Mounted infantry will seize CENTRAL SPUR, contour 200, at west side of SHORNCLIFFE CAMP, near GARRISON CHURCH. They will dismount and entrench if possible.

6. Infantry will advance by most covered routes through SHORNCLIFFE CAMP, 1st Battalion leading, preceded by scouts and skirmishers in very open formation. 2nd Battalion will follow in small column formations, furnishing one company as escort for artillery.

7. Artillery will follow infantry, and, when enemy is found, take up position to cover our advance.



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8. Bearer company will follow in extreme rear.
9. I shall be with leading battalion.

(Sd.) Q.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

At 9 a.m. the Eastern Force was put in motion, the cavalry and mounted infantry dashing away at once; the latter with the view of seizing quickly the tactical point named in their orders, and the former to use all their wits to discover the enemy's intentions, and to send back reliable information. A great responsibility is thrown in such matters upon the cavalry, for they might easily mislead as well as guide the COMMANDER, if they came to wrong conclusions or unintentionally perverted facts.

The commanders of the infantry battalions prescribed the order in which the companies were to move in accordance with the instructions given. No. 1 Company of the 1st Battalion threw out scouts half a mile in advance, and followed as a skirmishing line at 6 paces intervals. The second, third, and fourth lines followed at 300 yards' distance between each two lines. The companies formed lines of sections in fours at from 30 to 50 paces intervals. Two companies were in the second, and two companies in the third line, three companies in the fourth line. The 2nd Battalion followed, with the artillery betwen the two battalions. The 2nd Battalion marched in a line of company columns of sections.

As the infantry breasted the slopes leading to the SHORNCLIFFE CAMP PLATEAU, the 1st Battalion was warned to keep well to the north side of the CAMP when it

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arrived there, for it was now 9.40 a.m., and nothing had as yet occurred to induce the Eastern Force COMMANDER to alter his intended line of advance. On the contrary, about five minutes earlier he had heard by a cavalry report of the presence of hostile cavalry on the west side of ST. MARTIN'S PLAIN, also of a cavalry patrol being at SEABROOK, and the position of these reconnoitrers, together with some other indications brought to his notice, seemed to point out that the enemy would be found either on DIBGATE, or farther back north of SALTWOOD position.

At 9.55 a.m. the advanced scouts of No. 1 Company had reached a line (at about 250-feet level more or less) from the A.S. CORPS BARRACKS, past the GARRISON CHURCH, to near the ROMAN CATHOLIC CHAPEL, facing west. This line was prolonged to the north by the RECTORY, and overlooked ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH and SCHOOL, as well as UNDERHILL. The skirmishers of the company closed on the scouts; the whole came to a halt, and were ordered to lie down. As the remaining companies came up they were directed to move through the northern part of the CAMP, *viâ* ROSS and SOMERSET BARRACKS up to the cross-roads near the A.S. CORPS BARRACKS, where they got into assembly formation under shelter of the buildings.

The field battery turned off with its escort to the north at the cross-roads, ready to take position near ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH when required. The infantry battalion commanders now again resumed direction of their company units. The companies of the 1st Battalion were moved towards the right front, facing ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH. Four companies of the 2nd Battalion were placed east of the RECTORY. The remaining three companies were moving

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off to the left side of the A.S. Corps Barracks, facing west, and in doing so became for a moment or two exposed; they were promptly fired upon from the eastern corner of Casebourne and Paraker Woods.

Some sniping now took place from other parts of the border of the woods on the far side of the battery, and No. 1 Company returned the fire when anything could be seen of the enemy. No hostile artillery was anywhere visible. The infantry escort, No. 8 Company 2nd Battalion, was relieved at 10 a.m. by a section of the mounted infantry from the Central Post, and the company rejoined its battalion, relieving No. 1 Company 1st Battalion of skirmishers on the edge of the Plateau.

The Commander, seeing that an engagement would soon take place, sent an order to the bearer company to form a dressing-station near The Cottage on the east side of the Camp.

### *Narrative. Western Force (Red).*

At 8.30 a.m. the General Idea and also the Special Idea [1] of Western Force were given to Major R. at Sandling Park by an Assistant Umpire. The Staff Officer for the Western Force was also present, but he was not allowed by the rules to be consulted as to the plan to be followed, so Major R. left him to look after the men ordered to assemble by 8.45 a.m., and, taking his map and papers (by permission) into the billiard-room at the Park, proceeded to consider what he should do.

He scanned the country which lay between Sandling

[1] For Special Idea of Western Force, see page 142.

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PARK and FOLKESTONE on the map, and spotted the position he would like to take up for blocking the enemy in his tracks. His orders were plain and to the point. He was to fight a regular cut-and-thrust action, and not a rear-guard bluffing engagement, so he must put sufficient weight into his defence to enable him to withstand any kind of attack, whether it were by fire of rifles only, or by rifle and shrapnel shell fire in the first place, followed up at close range by attack with the bayonet, the use of which weapon in an infantry fight is by no means out of date.

As time was precious in seizing a position to hold, he thought first of his mounted infantry and cavalry, then of his infantry, and then of his artillery, at the same time studying the positions carefully on the map, summing up their advantages and drawbacks. He did not fancy the position on 300-ft. contour line north of SALTWOOD PUMPING STATION, as it was capable of being turned through wooded country on both sides, and was, moreover, cramped. He looked to the next on the map, which was BARGROVE—DIBGATE way, and this had its bad points also. It was facing the right way, and had a fair amount of open ground in front, but it also had a belt of wooded ground, CASEBOURNE and PARAKER WOODS, which was not to his liking, and he puzzled his brain to know how he could take advantage of this ground for his side, and deny it to the enemy as long as possible. He also objected to the hollow on the left flank, at the upper part of SEABROOK STREAM (just south of the railway), and he could not make use of BARGROVE FARM, as it was off the Government ground and out of bounds.

He next looked for a commanding and important tactical

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point for his mounted infantry to seize in advance, and hold with dismounted fire action. He saw one at the eastern edge of PARAKER WOOD, which projected somewhat out from the centre of the border, where a bridle road entering the wood from SEABROOK VALLEY passed from east to west towards DIBGATE FARM. This road should be denied to the enemy.

It appeared to MAJOR R. that if he took up the DIBGATE position, the enemy, following the orthodox system of tactics, would probably try and turn his left flank. He would therefore dispose his troops so as to be strongest in that direction, his reserves being placed with a view to rapid reinforcement of the left and left centre. The eastward perimeter of CASEBOURNE and PARAKER WOODS must be utilized for advanced infantry scouts. They would occupy the border, and retire therefrom after infliction of the greatest possible damage upon the advancing enemy. He would also provide for the right of the DIBGATE POSITION by holding the hill (POINT 263) and WHITENBROOK WOOD adjoining it as an outlying post, to guard against a turning movement on this flank should it be attempted.

The main line of defence would be farther back, with an open field of fire over DIBGATE PLATEAU and ST. MARTIN'S PLAIN; the guns being placed near LITTLE DIBGATE WOOD, no more central post offering itself for the artillery.

At 8.45 a.m. the COMMANDER of the Western Force assembled the officers in command of units and explained his plans to them, at the same time handing them each a copy of the "operation orders."

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**Detached Force Orders; by Major R. (Red).**

No. 1. SANDLING PARK,
To Os. Cg. Units. *February* 9, 19—, 8.45 *a.m.*

1. Enemy reported to be advancing from FOLKESTONE to seize SANDLING PARK JUNCTION, S.E. RAILWAY.

2. Our troops are coming up from ASHFORD.

3. I intend to hold position at DIBGATE with my force as per margin, and stop the enemy.

*One squadron.*
*One battery F.A.*
*One battalion.*
*Two sections M.I.*
*Half bearer co.*

4. Cavalry will reconnoitre to obtain information, and send it back as soon as possible; afterwards, if action ensues, withdrawing to operate on my left flank.

5. Mounted infantry will advance and seize eastern corner of PARAKER WOOD, where bridle road enters, holding the post till relieved by infantry.

6. Infantry battalion will push on one company in skirmishing order with advanced scouts to far border of CASEBOURNE and PARAKER WOODS. Five and a half companies will take up main position on BARGROVE—DIBGATE FARM—SCENE FARM line. Half a company as escort to artillery. One company to be kept as general reserve.

7. Artillery will be ready to take post on DIBGATE PLATEAU, facing east.

8. A dressing-station will be fixed in a suitable position.

9. I shall be at DIBGATE FARM when the action commences.

(Sd.) R.,
MAJOR

Issued personally in writing.

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At 9 a.m. the Western Force was set in motion.

The cavalry and mounted infantry dashed away, the former determined to get early, full, and accurate information, the latter bent on seizing the post at eastern corner of the woods, without detection by the hostile reconnoitring cavalry in doing so.

The infantry, in advancing, adopted a cautious attitude, the company in front, No. 1, throwing out scouts well forward, and then, extending rapidly to each flank at 6 paces intervals, moving on in skirmishing formation with every precaution; acting after the manner of deer-stalkers when passing over exposed places, keeping touch in a general way, but without mathematical precision of alignment, the object being to get to the cover of the woods without becoming unduly prominent, allowing for the distance at which the enemy must be at the time. The route lay by the ruins of SALTWOOD CASTLE, and then by a short cut up the slopes of BLACKHOUSE HILL, the scouts leading well ahead and thoroughly examining the ground. Nos. 2 and 3 Companies formed a second line at 300 yards' distance, moving in a line of small columns. Nos. 4 and 5 Companies followed in another line, and the remainder in small column formations.

At 9.30 a.m. the cavalry reported that some of the enemy were seen on the skyline above SANDGATE STATION, and others (presumably a cavalry patrol) at the CROSS-ROADS at SEABROOK, south of railway. These last, on being perceived, retired hastily towards HYTHE.

By 9.45 a.m. the infantry main body was near the top of BLACKHOUSE HILL, the guns a little behind, having had to make a *détour* to get a practicable road.

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At this hour report came that the mounted infantry had seized the eastern cover of PARAKER WOOD as ordered, at 9.40 a.m., and had dismounted, with their horses well hidden close by. Nothing was visible of the enemy from this post, but some of the men were about to crawl up the opposite slopes to try and get information, as they were told by a pedlar that troops were coming up on the north and east sides of the CAMP.

By 9.50 a.m. the advanced company's scouts and skirmishers had lined the edge facing east, north-east, and south-east of CASEBOURNE and PARAKER WOODS, being hidden behind the trees at the borders. Some had also taken post in LITTLE DIBGATE WOOD, a few being advanced behind folds of the ground on the 200-ft. contour at the edge of the hollow running east from BARGROVE, and looking over ST. MARTIN'S PLAIN to the north-east. The mounted infantry post at the east corner of PARAKER WOOD was relieved by the infantry, and the men accordingly remounted and rode off to DIBGATE FARM.

At this time the COMMANDER of the Western Force received report at DIBGATE FARM to effect that his cavalry, while scouting on ST. MARTIN'S PLAIN, had come across the enemy's cavalry scouts, and had also sighted hostile infantry advancing from north side of the CAMP in a sort of skirmishing formation. No artillery was perceived. As this report was being read a few rifle-shots from eastern edge of PARAKER WOOD were heard, but the firing was not long continued.

The disposition of the Western Force was now as follows :—

The advanced company, No. 1, placed as above described.

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No. 2 company, near LITTLE DIBGATE WOOD, on a line extending from a point about 100 yards east of the wood, where there was a slight fall to the rear from the ridge, to the north-east corner of SCENE WOOD. Half of No. 8 Company was at SCENE FARM; the other half-company being with the guns, which were posted about 150 yards to the east of LITTLE DIBGATE WOOD. The guns were covered by a rising slope which came up to the ridge on its north-eastern side.

Four other companies, Nos. 3, 4, 5, and 6, were at DIBGATE FARM. At the head of the hollow (south of BARGROVE) an entrenchment was being dug, and a parapet strengthened with stones thrown up. The slight ridge already mentioned, east of DIBGATE FARM, was also being entrenched, as the supports to the advanced line would be there placed. The remaining company, No. 7, was posted west of DIBGATE FARM as a general reserve.

At 9.55 a.m. the mounted infantry came in, on relief by the advanced scouts of the leading infantry company. They reported hostile infantry having been seen all along the western edge of SHORNCLIFFE CAMP, and that sniping was taking place on both sides across the valley. The COMMANDER ordered the sections to proceed at once to occupy POINT 263, and also WHITENBROOK WOOD close to it, as a post to cover the right flank. A few more shots were now heard from the edge of CASEBOURNE WOOD. No information as yet received of the presence of any hostile artillery.

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*General Narrative.*

By 10.5 a.m. the two forces opposing each other were in their respective positions on either side of the HORN STREET VALLEY, and by the Special Ideas the Western Force was committed to the defence, and the Eastern Force to the attack.

The situation had developed itself sufficiently by this time for the COMMANDER of the Eastern Force to perceive that he had to attack the opposite heights, and that he would find the enemy there to meet him. He therefore proceeded to carry out the plan the lines of which were indicated at the commencement of the narrative of the Eastern Force. He ordered his infantry to make an attack on the enemy's left flank up the hollow, the head of which lay between BARGROVE and DIBGATE, simultaneously delivered with two feigned frontal attacks on CASEBOURNE and PARAKER WOODS. The right frontal feint on the north-east border of CASEBOURNE WOOD was to be directed from UNDERHILL with No. 5 Company 2nd Battalion, and was not to be pushed beyond the north-western edge of CASEBOURNE WOOD. The left frontal feint was to be directed upon PARAKER WOOD with three companies, Nos. 6, 7, and 8, 2nd Battalion, and to be pushed up the valley in the western part of the wood towards SCENE WOOD and SCENE FARM, to make a diversion on the enemy's right flank, while the main force attempted to turn his left flank. The main attack up the hollow south of BARGROVE would be made at the same time as the frontal attacks, with eight companies 1st Battalion and

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four companies 2nd Battalion. The enemy's extreme right flank was to be also threatened by the remaining section of mounted infantry, one section having been sent as escort to the guns.

The COMMANDER of the Blue side having completed his final dispositions for the attack, the force was ready to move forward by 10.5 a.m. The flanking troops advanced on the upper ground *viâ* ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH and above UNDERHILL; the attacking party for the right feint, of one company, going through UNDERHILL and up the hill towards CASEBOURNE WOOD, the transverse hedges offering the men rests after their forward rushes. The three companies for the left feint went down by SEABROOK VALE and approached the east side of PARAKER WOOD. The leading troops in all these advances were formed in skirmishing order several lines deep, at considerable distances apart, and the intervals at which the men were extended were from five to twenty-five paces, according to the ground.

While these movements were progressing, the infantry of the Western Force lining the border of CASEBOURNE and PARAKER WOODS lost no opportunity of bringing rifle fire to bear on their opponents. Some of the infantry of the Eastern Force showing themselves too plainly near UNDERHILL, the Western Force artillery at LITTLE DIBGATE WOOD were tempted into opening fire upon the enemy, thus betraying the position of the Red guns. The Blue guns came shortly into action against them, taking post with a good background to the south-west of ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, at a range of about 1400 yards from their target. Fire on each side was opened between 10.12 and 10.15 a.m.

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As the flank attack took a little time in developing, it was quite twenty minutes later before the frontal attacks began to make themselves felt, the crossing of the SEABROOK STREAM being effected with great care and deliberation, line by line, the points where best cover and concealment were available being always selected. The advance up the western slopes of the valley was continued in the same manner. The advanced skirmishers of the Western Force at border of the woods tried to do what they could to detain the Eastern Force, but the country was so close and uneven that the assailants got plenty of cover, and did not suffer as much loss as might have been expected, quarries and fences helping the attackers by giving them resting-places from time to time.

At 10.30 a.m. the advanced Western skirmishers thought it time to begin to fall back from the eastern border of the woods. Those at the northern portion of CASEBOURNE WOOD drew rather together at the north end, and lay down beside their comrades already holding this part of the border, with the view (by increased fire action) of drawing the flanking attack up the hill in their direction. When they withdrew these men did so towards the head of the hollow, leaving an open glacis-like slope up which the enemy could attack if so inclined. The skirmishers of the Red side, on the other hand, holding the eastern part of PARAKER WOOD, fell back towards SCENE FARM, which was the supporting central point for the right of the Red position.

At 10.35 a.m. the main flanking attack of the Eastern Force got through the coppice north of UNDERHILL, and the leading troops were to the west of the coppice holding the SEABROOK STREAM on its north-east side, being fairly

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well concealed behind the trees which lined the bank at this place, and suffering no appreciable loss.

The attacking troops now began to recognize the fact that the defenders were holding the opposite ridge to the north and north-west of CASEBOURNE WOOD, and that there was not much cover to be got at the closer ranges, except what might be afforded by a hedge and partially destroyed fence about 100 yards' distance from the stream on the south-western bank. There was also, however, higher up the stream on the south side, a wood called SANDPIT COPPICE, situated at the head of the hollow through which the stream ran. They determined to make for this shelter, and four companies of the 1st Battalion succeeded in getting behind it, and then crossed the stream into the coppice. The other four companies of the 1st Battalion also crossed over, and got cover behind the fence and hedge already mentioned, and in folds of the ground along the bank of the stream. The general reserve of four companies 2nd Battalion took shelter behind the trees on the north-east bank.

While these operations were taking place, the COMMANDER of the Western Force had communicated by his STAFF OFFICER with the officer in charge of the two sections of mounted infantry at POINT 263, this officer being asked if he could spare any men. He had replied that, as his position was strong, and the detachment of the Blue Force watching him was not formidable, he could, if necessary, let one section of his force go upon any other duty. Under these circumstances the STAFF OFFICER directed one section to mount and accompany him to DIBGATE FARM, where they arrived at 10.40 a.m.

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The frontal attacks of the Eastern Force were now progressing towards the borders of the CASEBOURNE and PARAKER WOODS, which were at this time quite vacated by the Western skirmishers, and at 10.45 a.m. the right feint, made by No. 5 Company, reached the outside edge of the CASEBOURNE WOOD. The flank attack was now ready to be delivered and pushed home, and a simultaneous effort was made by six of the companies 1st Battalion, supported by the other two companies as local reserve, to carry the crest of the left flank of the Red position, on the 200-feet contour line, overlooking the hollow and SEABROOK STREAM. The four companies 2nd Battalion, acting as general reserve, lined the hedge south-west of the stream with two companies, by direction of the Blue COMMANDER, to support the leading troops. The latter lost slightly on their left, but Nos. 1 and 2 Companies of the 1st Battalion, on the right of the attack, which rushed up the head of the hollow, suffered much more, coming under a cross fire at the top of the depression from a sangar there constructed, and from the east side of the valley head. At this point the Blue Force was checked, but at all other parts of the flank attack the assailants reached the crest breathless but determined, and threw themselves down just at the edge of the glacis-like plateau which extended from the ridge east of LITTLE DIBGATE FARM to the 200-feet contour line above the SEABROOK STREAM.

It was now 10.55 a.m. The COMMANDER of the Western Force determined to use his newly arrived section of mounted infantry to join in a counter attack at the next critical moment. The men of the section accordingly mounted and trotted up the road on west of DIBGATE

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FARM to a point about 200 yards beyond LITTLE DIBGATE WOOD. Here they dismounted again and concealed themselves behind a bank of the road near the head of the hollow, being shortly joined by No. 7 Company of the infantry held as general reserve west of DIBGATE FARM.

At 11.5 a.m. another attack was prepared to be made by the Eastern Force. The troops leading this movement were well supported by the 2nd Battalion Blue companies, which crossed the stream to the right bank, two companies moving into the coppice in the hollow, the two others being on the left near the north end of CASEBOURNE WOOD. The left frontal feint by Nos. 6, 7, and 8 Companies 2nd Battalion seemed, by sound of the firing, to be progressing through PARAKER WOOD, but the right frontal feint of Blue had, according to orders, not gone beyond the inside edge of CASEBOURNE WOOD.

The guns on each side were in action and firing at intervals over the heads of the nearest intervening troops, when the fall of the ground allowed of it.

The Blue flank attack now delivered was vigorously pushed, but the fire of the Red troops from DIBGATE FARM and the ridge near to it was very powerful, and there was little or no cover for the assailants on the plateau. The latter were, however, very superior in numbers, and so they progressed, although painfully, over the exposed ground, being well fed by the reserves. At this juncture, however, the Maxim gun at the FARM was suddenly unmasked and poured in a shower of lead upon the Blue troops on the PLATEAU. The Red guns simultaneously opened fire with case, and between these two fires the PLATEAU was speedily cleared of the enemy.

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At the same time the assailants at the head of the hollow were met by a decisive counter attack on part of the Red troops, made by the section of dismounted men and No. 7 Company concealed behind the bank of the road near by; some fresh blood being thus brought to bear, with result that the Blue troops on the extreme right of the attack were pushed helter skelter down the hollow, and finally had to take shelter in the coppice on south bank of stream.

At all other parts of the line the engagement became general, and at 11.15 a.m. the "Cease fire" was sounded by order of the CHIEF UMPIRE.

*Summing up.*

The CHIEF UMPIRE, having listened to what the ASSISTANT UMPIRES and the troop leaders had to say with reference to this fight, observed that the affair was an instructive example of attack and defence practice, chiefly owing to the peculiarities of the position which had to be assumed by the Western Force, strong in some ways, but also with inherent elements of weakness. A good deal depended on the method of attack resorted to by the enemy, and the Western Force COMMANDER proved to have successfully anticipated an attack on his left flank. He did not, however, make this assumption on sufficiently good and certain grounds, and he might easily have been mistaken, in which case his dispositions would hardly have been suitable for resisting an attack on the right flank, notwithstanding the presence of the mounted infantry post at POINT 263.

As regards the Eastern Force, the CHIEF UMPIRE thought



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the COMMANDER chose the wrong flank for his real attack, but otherwise he had endeavoured to the best of his power to carry out intelligently the instructions in his Special Idea, and if his attack upon DIBGATE PLATEAU had been crowned by success, he would have easily passed on to seize the RAILWAY JUNCTION, which was presumed to be his ultimate objective.

*Comments.*

The various advantages which invisibility, mobility, individuality, and the use of entrenchments bring to the side which can count these factors in the sum total of success, are strongly exemplified in this scheme.

The defenders had the usual points in their favour, such as easy concealment of forces, facility for making dispositions secretly, and the power of getting in a greater number of effective shots per minute against the assailants, due to the comparative security of the troops on the defensive, and the relatively greater exposure of the attackers.

The assailants had on their side some advantage from the peculiar conformation of the woods in front of the defenders, which enabled misleading or feigned movements to be made by the Eastern force. These woods also offered the latter an opportunity, which was not taken, for making an attack threatening the main line of retreat of the force, at a comparatively small angle, and with protecting cover close by; this would favour the attack by a small force, wide turning movements requiring a greater number of troops.

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An instance is presented in the exercise, of the vast influence which the conformation of the actual ground has in the selection of the special method of tactics which should be employed in any particular case, in order to secure the greatest benefit for the fighting men. As regards this point, it certainly appears as if the CHIEF UMPIRE was right in his opinion, and that greater chances of success would have resulted if the Eastern Force had attempted to turn the enemy's right flank through PARAKER WOOD, instead of delivering the main attack up the hollow of the SEABROOK STREAM on the Red left flank, entailing a final passage across comparatively open ground at decisive ranges. In the attack which was actually carried out, a greater weight of fire should have been arranged to be brought to bear by the supporting force upon the defenders, when the rush for the PLATEAU by the assailants from the SEABROOK STREAM upper valley took place. Reserves in the present day must be freely used to ensure success.

It must also be said that in attemping to secure cover for the advance at distant ranges by selecting the line of attack in question, the COMMANDER of the Eastern Force committed himself to an assault at the shorter ranges under disadvantageous conditions.

It is easy to be wise after the event, but it appears surprising that the Eastern Force leader did not hesitate (if such an expression be allowed in tactics) before diving with his main force into the hollow of the SEABROOK VALLEY north-west of UNDERHILL. He might have attacked with quite inappreciable loss under cover of the PARAKER WOOD on the enemy's right, favoured by the close country

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in the valley below for cover, whilst feinting on the proper right to confuse and puzzle the enemy. As a preliminary to the main advance, the feeble Red post at WHITENBROOK WOOD and POINT 263 could have been easily carried by the Blue Force.

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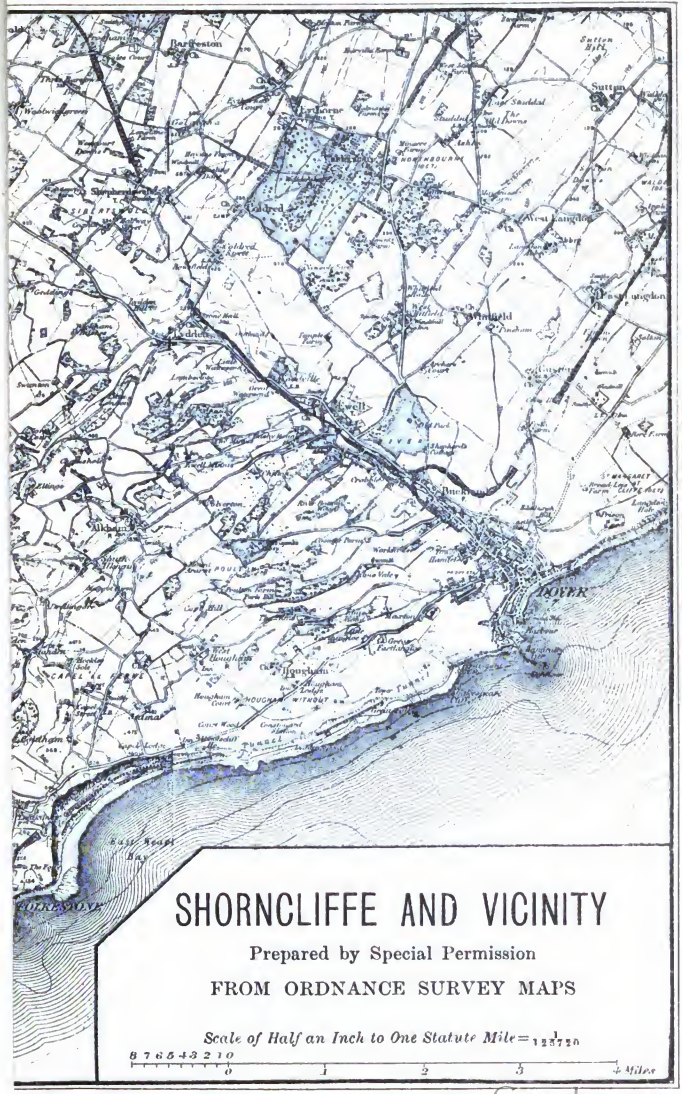


# SHORNCLIFFE AND VICINITY

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FROM ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPS

*Scale of Half an Inch to One Statute Mile* = $\frac{1}{126720}$

8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0 — 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 Miles

Opposite page 164.

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# I.

## TACTICAL OPERATION AT COLCHESTER.

(*See Maps* 5, 6.)

ADVANCED GUARD *v.* REAR GUARD.

*July* 20, 19—.

THE General and Special Ideas of this scheme have been set by an officer well acquainted with the COLCHESTER training-ground, and are partly based on a scheme set at COLCHESTER in 1894, and given in the Blue Book report published in 1895, which contains a large number of headings of typical tactical exercises, for the use of officers preparing for examination.

The various steps of the operation have now been worked out anew, war-game fashion, on the map, and have also been carefully checked on the ground.

### *General Idea.*

The Blue fleet having obtained temporary possession of the CHANNEL, a large flotilla has been observed off MERSEA ISLAND, and troops are reported to have been landed at LITTLE WIGBOROUGH. The Red troops are moving out of COLCHESTER by the MANNINGTREE road.

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*Special Idea. Southern Force (Blue).*

An advanced guard of the Blue troops has reached MAYPOLE FARM early on July 20, 19—, having bivouacked near the ROMAN RIVER during the past night. The officer in command receives the following order from the G.O. Cg. the division to which he belongs:—

"ABBERTON,
"*July* 20, 19—, 7.30 *a.m.*

"Push on eastward and occupy OLD HEATH. I understand there is a large collection of stores at ROWHEDGE, and that an attempt will be made to withdraw them to COLCHESTER. Wagons have been loading all the night through. You must stop this, and I will support you later in the day, probably before noon."

*Special Idea. Northern Force (Red).*

A detached force has been left behind at COLCHESTER to protect the departmental troops engaged in removing stores from ROWHEDGE. The officer in command receives the following order from the G.O. Cg. COLCHESTER garrison:—

"COLCHESTER,
"*July* 20, 19—, 7.30 *a.m.*

"We are falling back on IPSWICH. Stores are being removed from ROWHEDGE. March your force to OLD HEATH, and keep enemy back if he interferes with the operation. You can then follow on the MANNINGTREE Road, and act as rear guard to the last of the troops leaving COLCHESTER."

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N.B.—Each force was to consist of one squadron of cavalry, one section (two guns) field artillery, and one battalion of infantry, with a half bearer company added. MAJOR G. to command the Southern or Blue Force, to rendezvous at MAYPOLE FARM at 9.40 a.m. MAJOR K. to command the Northern or Red Force, to rendezvous at ABBEY FIELD at 9.30 a.m.

Topographical Hints :—Taking COLCHESTER as starting-point and distances as the crow flies, IPSWICH is 13½ miles N.E., MANNINGTREE 7½ miles E.N.E., the south coast of MERSEA ISLAND 8 miles S., ABBERTON 4 miles S., and ROWHEDGE 3 miles S.E. on the COLNE RIVER. LITTLE WIGBOROUGH is 2 miles W. of the western part of MERSEA ISLAND.

### *Narrative. Southern Force (Blue).*

The rendezvous for this force being fixed at MAYPOLE FARM, Major G. was there at 9.25 a.m., and received a copy of the General Idea and also of the Special Idea for the Blue Force from an Assistant Umpire. The troops were ordered to arrive at 9.40 a.m., and whilst waiting for them to arrive the COMMANDER took his map and his instructions into a quiet room at the farmhouse, and proceeded to study the ground with a view of formulating his plan of action.

To approach OLD HEATH he would have to pass through a flattish but undulating country, with contours not anywhere exceeding 100 feet elevation. The ROMAN RIVER would be on his right hand, between two and three miles away, with bridges crossing it in two places; the coppices

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of DONYLAND WOOD and DONYLAND HEATH being also between the river and his objective, OLD HEATH. On the east of DONYLAND HEATH ran the main road to COLCHESTER from FINGRINGHOE, *viâ* DONYLAND LODGE and OLD HEATH from the south, and leading also from ROWHEDGE, rising when north of the ROMAN RIVER by a gentle acclivity to the north side of DONYLAND HEATH, whence a curved undulating road went on towards COLCHESTER.

MAJOR G. considered the situation thus. He had to seize OLD HEATH, and in going for a position must look sharp, as he knew the enemy was alert, and might be there or thereabouts before him. He had to study the intermediate country, and think what the enemy was about; and must either wait till he got more information than he had at present, or go on gaily trusting to luck, which is a bad mistress and fickle as fate. He preferred not to take anything for granted in war if he could help it, but might obtain the necessary information on the road before very long, if his cavalry were a highly trained intelligent lot, which he hoped they might turn out to be. He did not see any prominent intermediate positions for artillery at long ranges, so must be satisfied to risk his guns to a certain extent at shorter ranges, concealing them, however, as well as possible both on the march and when in position for greater safety. They might have to bolt for cover at any time, so he would provide them with a mounted escort. They must assist the advance of the Southern Force by opening fire when required from a well-concealed position. MAJOR G. expected support at noon, so determined not to be too eager or dashing in the attack if he should meet with serious opposition. This he

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expected, as he was told that a Northern Force occupied COLCHESTER, and expected stores from direction of ROWHEDGE, the transport of which he presumed the enemy would cover with a detached force, whilst his main force would be in COLCHESTER or not far from it. Major G. did not know when the convoy of stores was expected, but as he read his instructions he was to seize OLD HEATH to block their being brought into COLCHESTER, and the sooner this could be done the better. The artillery must not reveal its position prematurely, but would be used to co-operate with the infantry in attack, keeping in touch with the advance, and intensifying the fire as it progressed.

For all the COMMANDER knew, the covering force of the enemy might be in DONYLAND WOOD and DONYLAND HEATH at this moment, and another force coming out from COLCHESTER to slip in, so that both could crush him between them; it therefore behoved him to be wary, in case they should feint with a small force to lure him on, and then catch him on the flank while engaging the enemy in his front.

Having thus duly considered the situation from all points of view, the COMMANDER of the Southern Force issued the following "operation orders:"—

**Advanced Guard Orders; by O. Cg. Southern Force (Blue).**

No. 1. MAYPOLE FARM,
To Os. Cg. Units. *June* 21, 19—9.40 *a.m.*

1. The enemy is about to run a convoy of stores from ROWHEDGE to COLCHESTER *viâ* OLD HEATH.

2. We shall be reinforced from ABBERTON at or before noon.

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3. I mean to seize OLD HEATH, with the force as per margin, and stop the stores being removed to COLCHESTER.

*One squadron.*
*One battalion.*
*One section F.A.*
*Half bearer co.*

4. Cavalry will reconnoitre towards COLCHESTER, ROWHEDGE, and OLD HEATH, and report as to enemy. One troop will form escort for guns.

5. Artillery will move cautiously with escort to CABBAGE HALL FARM and find a well-concealed position, to cover advance against OLD HEATH.

6. Infantry will move in advanced guard order on OLD HEATH *viâ* BLACKHEATH FARM and CABBAGE HALL FARM.

7. Bearer company will follow the infantry.

8. I shall be with the guns.

(Sd.) H.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

In handing over the orders, the COMMANDER of the Southern Force explained to the commander of the infantry battalion that the greatest care should be taken not to fall into an ambuscade, which might be obviated by the vanguard covering as wide a frontage as possible, and being sent on well in advance, having numerous scouts out front and flanks. The main guard to be ready to open out in any direction at a moment's notice. Later on it might be called upon to furnish a company in relief of the cavalry escort to guns. The battalion commander detailed Nos. 1

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and 2 Companies as van-guard, and impressed the above instructions on the company leaders.

At 9.55 a.m. the Southern Force was put in motion. The cavalry advanced rapidly to scour the country in the vicinity of DONYLAND WOOD and HEATH, as well as the OLD HEATH and COLCHESTER direction, for the Commander of the force would expect to have some definite information to guide him by the time he got to BLACKHEATH neighbourhood, where the main road ABBERTON to COLCHESTER ran transversely across his front. Here the CABBAGE HALL FARM position, 100-feet contour, lying in open country except for hedges, would be only some 400 yards from his left were he extended on the main road, and some 600 to 700 yards from his right did he stretch out as far as ROMAN HILL FARM. This was the first good position facing OLD HEATH, and whether he should occupy it or not on getting within its reach would depend on the news brought by his cavalry.

At 10.50 a.m. firing was heard as the Southern Force was nearing St. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, and at that hour an intelligent cavalry scout rushed in to say, "The enemy's cavalry are in force about a quarter-mile beyond BLACKHEATH FARM, and we are fighting them. We were surprised to find them there. They were dismounted, and we had not been able to drive them back when I left, so there is no time to lose."

The COMMANDER of the Southern Force immediately directed the battalion commander to send forward one of the van-guard companies, to assist the cavalry to drive back the hostile force near BLACKHEATH FARM. No. 2 Company was accordingly despatched to the front, and

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rapidly extended a half-company in skirmishing order with scouts in extreme advance. The other half-company opened out also, and followed as a support 100 yards in rear.

The remainder of the column, after a short halt at ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, where the bearer company was ordered to establish a dressing-station, in view of a probable coming engagement, continued its advance towards CABBAGE HALL FARM. No. 2 Company reached BLACKHEATH FARM at 10.15 a.m.

### *Narrative. Northern Force (Red).*

The rendezvous of the Northern Force took place at the ABBEY FIELD, COLCHESTER, at 9.15 a.m., June 21, where the COMMANDER received the General Idea and also the Special Idea [1] for the Northern Force from an ASSISTANT UMPIRE. Leaving his STAFF OFFICER to look after the troops, which were ordered to be there by 9.30 a.m., the COMMANDER took his map apart to examine the problem. The considerations which presented themselves to MAJOR K. were somewhat as follows. The stores were all expected to be got to COLCHESTER during the forenoon, as he understood from inquiries which he had made, and the vehicles would progress at a slow rate owing to the undulating nature of the road. The hour being then 9.15 a.m. they might be expected to be at DONYLAND HEATH, three-quarters of a mile to the north side of the bridge over the ROMAN RIVER at FINGRINGHOE, by say 10.30 a.m. If the Northern troops moved off from the rendezvous at 9.45

[1] For Special Idea Northern Force, see page 166.

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a.m. they would get to DONYLAND HEATH by 10.40 a.m., and at that time the stores should have passed that place. He must take up a position with his force to cover the convoy on the road from DONYLAND HEATH to COLCHESTER.

A position on the map must therefore be sought. As far as could be seen, there was only one available—that at MIDDLEWICK. The troops would have to be fitted to the position, as the position could not be made to fit the troops. Looking at the map, however, he saw that a fairly good field of fire, especially as regards depth, was in front of this position, which would enable the ground to be held strongly for a time. He had to fight a delaying action, only, say, until noon, and afterwards to become a rear guard to the force retiring on IPSWICH, therefore he could spread out his troops more extensively than if he were defending a more permanent position.

He must, however, consider the most likely direction from which his enemy would appear. The General Idea told him the enemy had landed at LITTLE WIGBOROUGH (about 8 miles S.W. of COLCHESTER), so he would expect his opponent to come by either of two roads, one from the south, and the other—the most likely to be used—from the south-west.

He would use his cavalry to find out as quickly as possible where his enemy might be found and the direction of the invaders' approach, and to gain time he would have his cavalry to dismount in order to keep back the Southern Force as long as possible, and enable the Northern Force to gain its position and occupy it comfortably before the enemy could arrive within striking distance.

With regard to his artillery, he saw that in a close

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country like that in which he was operating he could not get his guns to work effectively at very long ranges, and he would be forced to try and conceal them to avoid possible annihilation by infantry fire at close ranges. He wished much for some light and very mobile guns, easily moved about by hand, which could be brought up quickly from under cover when a good target appeared, and then be run back again for protection.

He saw that the position near the rifle butts was the best one available both for command and concealment, and as the Northern Force would be on the defence, and therefore in a greater state of rest than the attackers, the guns would be more easily hidden. He would not disclose nor unmask them unnecessarily, nor until their fire was wanted for some distant advantage or object. Such occasion might arise when the fight was developed, to bear upon hostile infantry leaving their covered positions to gain some other protected points nearer to the defenders, or else to enfilade bodies of advancing assailants. The enemy's guns also might expose themselves or be badly placed, and in such case might be quickly put out of action by surprise artillery fire from a well-covered position.

Having matured his plans with due regard to the fore going and other considerations, MAJOR K. proceeded to issue the following "operation orders:"—

**Rear Guard Orders; by O. Cg. Northern Force (Red).**

No. 1. ABBEY FIELD,
To Os. Cg. Units. *June* 21, 19—, 9.35 *a.m.*

1. Enemy is collecting, and may attack us from the south-west direction.

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2. Our troops in COLCHESTER are expecting convoy stores from ROWHEDGE.

3. I intend, with my force as per margin, to cover the ROWHEDGE—COLCHESTER Road against possible attack from the south-west, so as to allow the convoy to pass unmolested up to 12 o'clock noon.

*One squadron.*
*One battalion.*
*One section F.A.*
*Half bearer co.*

4. Cavalry will report on enemy's position. If within striking distance, may dismount and stop his advance, to give me time to take up position at MIDDLEWICK. One troop to be sent as escort to guns.

5. Artillery will take up concealed position at MIDDLEWICK.

6. Infantry will move to MIDDLEWICK with scouts thrown well out front and flanks.

7. Bearer company will follow, but not further than BROOM HILL.

(Sd.) K.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

MAJOR K., in handing over the orders, explained to the cavalry that if driven back they should retire eastward, to cover the rear of the convoy moving towards COLCHESTER. The infantry were further told that a position would be selected for them at MIDDLEWICK, and also that a company should relieve the cavalry escort to artillery on arrival at that place.

At 9.45 a.m. the Northern Force was put in motion. The cavalry started off at a gallop, and by 10 a.m. half a

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troop was dismounted and well concealed by the smithy at the cross-roads a quarter-mile east of BLACKHEATH FARM, ready to block the road from MAYPOLE FARM. A troop was with the guns, and the remainder of the squadron was dispersed to reconnoitre.

At 10.5 o'clock the leading files of the Southern cavalry came cantering up the road from direction of MAYPOLE FARM. They were brought to a stand with some loss by the fire of the dismounted men of the Northern Force at the cross-roads, and, turning about, the Southern troop rushed back along the road as far as the farm buildings of BLACKHEATH FARM. Here they dismounted and endeavoured to return the fire of their opponents at the cross-roads. The latter were, however, well posted, and would have stood their ground for a considerable time if required. At 10.15 a.m. the Southern Force brought up a company of infantry, and the Northern cavalry troop had to retire, which it did by SUNNYMEAD.

## *General Narrative.*

In the meantime, the infantry and guns of the Northern Force had arrived uninterrupted at the position proposed to be taken up, and got into their places, a message being sent back to the bearer company to desire a dressing-station to be fixed at BROOM HILL, in vicinity to the COLCHESTER Road. The infantry battalion took post with its right about a quarter-mile south of the BUTT marked E on the map, at MIDDLEWICK, being formed on the 75-feet contour line, extending towards DONYLAND LODGE, and commanding the bridge over the BIRCH BROOK, near BIRCH

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BROOK COTTAGES. The guns were neatly hidden near E. BUTT. This position, with the BROOK between it and the enemy, and an open field of fire, was a very strong one to hold against a force numerically equal; it gave great advantages of concealment to troops not in motion, acting as its defenders.

At 10.45 a.m. the Southern Force began to move up for advance, taking post on the 100-feet contour line, with CABBAGE HALL FARM as a central supporting point. From this point the Southern guns opened fire, preparatory to an advance against the force covering OLD HEATH, and thus revealed their position, which had been concealed by the surrounding buildings and enclosures. The Northern guns quickly took advantage of this, and finding the range, which was an extremely short one, directed their fire upon the Southern guns, causing them serious loss in a few moments of time. The Southern COMMANDER now gave the order to advance, and this movement was about to be executed when the CHIEF UMPIRE directed the "Cease fire" to be sounded.

*Summing up.*

The CHIEF UMPIRE, on the OFFICERS assembling, remarked that he considered the Northern or Red Force had taken up a position which was sufficiently good for the purpose of covering the road by which the stores were to be conveyed to COLCHESTER. The field of fire was extensive to the front and flanks; the position was not easy to turn, and natural cover in the form of hedges and fences being available, the gradual retirement, in order that the force might act as a rear guard later in the day, should be capable of being carried out in an orderly manner. Having



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a good field of fire in depth, hostile movements on part of the enemy could be defeated, and the advance of the Southern Force, if attempted, would be incapable of being carried out in the time at its disposal. Nor could there be a doubt that the position was too strong to be carried by an equally constituted force were it attacked.

The orders issued on both sides were judicious. The Southern Force had, however, everything against it, and was obliged to go ahead at the position taken up by its adversary without knowing much of what was on the flanks. Circumstances and events compelled this line of action.

The advantage of the initiative lay, in the first instance, with the Northern or defending force, as it got the first start. The COMMANDER was thus enabled, assisted by the delaying action of his cavalry, to reach the best position for defence in advance of his adversary. The guns on both sides were skilfully concealed, which showed that both COMMANDERS had appreciated the difficulty of finding suitable artillery positions in so flat a country, cut up and intersected by highly cultivated land. The Southern Force COMMANDER, by posting his guns right inside the enclosures of the CABBAGE HALL FARM and buildings, no doubt ran a risk, if the enemy had been provided with highly explosive shells; but he probably knew that the opposing guns were not thus armed, and considered he was therefore justified in taking up this sort of position with a view to better concealment.

On the whole the CHIEF UMPIRE thought that the Northern Force had certainly the best of it, but that the COMMANDER of the Southern Force had played a losing game with care, patience, and judgment.

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*Comments.*

This little action, short and simple as it was, is not without its suggestive lessons. If the improved weapons of the times tend to make artificial defences more important and necessary than ever, would not the great addition of natural cover and obstacles, appertaining to a closely cultivated country, tend to accentuate the surprise power of mobile troops armed with rapid firing and almost invisible artillery; and would not this be more than ever the case if the comparative flatness of the terrain makes it almost impossible to carry out accurate observations at quite a short distance? The artillery positions in this study are curiously near to each other, but the nature of the ground gives little or no option. The question, then, is, will it be exceptional in close country fighting to find suitable artillery positions at a reasonable distance from each other; or will it not often occur, in a flat and much-enclosed country like that on which this action was fought, that no positions except those at close ranges are open to the artillery engaged?

If such be the case, it would appear as if the number of guns would have to be brought to a minimum for fighting in close country, or else the guns should be dispersed (an arrangement not much in favour with gunners), as it is easier on such ground to find a concealed position for two guns than for six. The placing of MAJOR G.'s section at the farm is a good example of this; he could find good cover there for two guns, but certainly could not have kept a whole battery protected. It has been suggested that we should use guns of the pom-pom variety for the class

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of work in question, and this appears by far the best solution of the difficulty. The lightness of such guns enables them to be easily placed in covered positions, and to be easily withdrawn, and their rapidity of fire compensates for the absence of weight in the projectile.

In order in such country to make the best uses of artillery, it is necessary, unless the actual ground is well known to the COMMANDER, to make a most careful study of the map, and even then it is easy to be deceived. A place which appears to be an excellent artillery position when the map alone is studied may turn out on actual inspection to be good only in one direction. This consideration leads us to wish that special maps of a theatre of war should, whenever possible, be prepared by experts in tactics and map-reading, showing marked on their faces the positions suitable for infantry and artillery. Such maps would be of great value in a country like that over which the foregoing operation took place. The whole of the COLCHESTER training-ground is of a similar character.

Finally, the necessities of time and space are not infrequently such that, as has been similarly remarked in the comments on a previous exercise, risks due to circumstances beyond the immediate control of the individual commander have to be run in war to accomplish good results, however much the leader may desire to avoid them. In this fight the Southern COMMANDER had to proceed to the attack to conform to his instructions, without any certain information as to the forces of the enemy on his flanks or front. Forced marches for the purpose of seizing a position of vantage before the enemy can do so, on the line of march or on a convoy route, or for the purpose of

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a rapid concentration to overwhelm isolated forces by a larger combination, all necessitate working against time, and in order to carry out instructions risks must be run, being justified or condemned in accordance with their success or failure; with both of these factors the element of luck becomes closely associated.

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# K.

## TACTICAL OPERATION AT COLCHESTER.

(*See Maps* 5, 6.)

ATTACK AND DEFENCE OF A CONVOY.

*July* 15, 19—.

THE General and Special Ideas of this scheme have been set by an officer who has an intimate knowledge of the COLCHESTER training-ground. The details have been carefully worked out after the manner of the war game, and have also been checked on the ground. The scheme as it stands is fairly typical of the sort of operation possible on this manœuvre-ground of very limited area.

### *General Idea.*

A hostile army (Blue) which has temporarily occupied COLCHESTER is retiring to its anchored transports at the COLNE RIVER MOUTH. A portion of the Home Army (Red) is on its way from LONDON to attack the invaders whilst carrying out their retreat.

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*Special Idea. Northern Force (Blue).*

"From Chief of Staff (Blue). "IPSWICH,
To O. Cg. Field Force, COLCHESTER. *July* 15, 19—, 3.30 *a.m.*

"The enemy's army (Red) is approaching BRENTWOOD. I am sending heavy consignment of stores to ships off mouth of COLNE at 8.30 a.m. to-day from COLCHESTER. Convoy proceeds *vid* BIRCH BROOK BRIDGE and FINGRINGHOE VILLAGE. You must protect it until it gets past north-east corner of DONYLAND HEATH. You may expect support later."

*Special Idea. Western Force (Red).*

"From O. Cg. Division (Red). "KELVEDON STATION,
To O. Cg. Detached Force, BOTTLE END. *July* 15, 19—, 6 *a.m.*

"Friendly spies report that the Blue troops are clearing out of COLCHESTER to re-embark. Bar their progress on south roads by occupying CABBAGE HALL FARM and WHITE BARN as supporting centres. You will be reinforced by 10 a.m. at BLACKHEATH FARM by two battalions."

N.B.—The rendezvous for the Northern Force to be at ABBEY FIELD, where the following were to assemble: One squadron of cavalry, one section of field artillery, two sections of mounted infantry, and one battalion of infantry, with a half bearer company. The convoy to march off at 8.30 a.m. with its immediate escort; the rest of the troops at 8.45 a.m. MAJOR O. to command the Northern Force.

The rendezvous for the Western Force to be at BOTTLE END, where the following were to assemble: One squadron

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of cavalry, one section of field artillery, one section of mounted infantry, and one battalion of infantry, with a half bearer company. No man to leave the rendezvous before 9 a.m., except cavalry scouts, who may start at 8.50 a.m. MAJOR E. to command the Western Force.

Boundaries:—GOVERNMENT MANŒUVRING GROUND, and on the south the ROMAN RIVER.

Topographical Hints:—IPSWICH is 13 miles N.E. of COLCHESTER; BRENTWOOD is 30 miles S.W. of COLCHESTER, on the LONDON and COLCHESTER line of rail. KELVEDON STATION is 9 miles from COLCHESTER on same line. BOTTLE END is $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile S.W. of COLCHESTER on the MALDON Road.

*Narrative. Northern Force (Blue).*

MAJOR O. reached the rendezvous at ABBEY FIELD at 8 a.m., when he received the General Idea and also the Special Idea for the Northern Force. He at once proceeded to consider the situation and determine upon a plan of action.

The points for inspection were numerous. The enemy might be anywhere threatening the track of the convoy, so it was necessary to scrutinize carefully the route which the wagons must follow. Fortunately the ground being limited in extent, the area to be examined was not large; it was only necessary to look to the positions on MIDDLEWICK and the DRILL GROUND, and on as far as the DONYLAND WOODS. The roads leading south to FINGRINGHOE and ABBERTON were important, and also the transverse roads by which the enemy could head off the convoy; these latter must also be examined to see if good lateral

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communications could be kept up by their means between the convoy and its covering force.

As a matter of course, time would be an essential element in the COMMANDER'S calculations, and he would have to endeavour to get his convoy past DONYLAND HEATH before the enemy could attack it. He would require to use his mounted infantry to seize points at which the enemy might be delayed in an attempt to reach or head the convoy, and he must necessarily forestall the enemy in the possession of such tactical points. At the same time the convoy must not be permitted to hurry on ahead in advance of the interposing screen of slow-moving troops, which would march between the wagons and the enemy. Until clear information came in from his cavalry, it would be difficult for the COMMANDER of the Northern Force to know whether he might expect molestation on part of the enemy, from both flanks or from one only. In the last case he presumed, from the fact of the route of the convoy being directed to be along the eastern side of the GOVERNMENT GROUND, that the attack would probably come from the west, but confirmation of this would have to come from his cavalry reconnaissance.

At 8.15 a.m. MAJOR O. issued the following "operation orders:"—

**Convoy Orders; by O. Cg. Northern Force (Blue).**

No. 1. ABBEY FIELD,
To Os. Cg. Units. *June* 15, 19—, 8.15 *a.m.*

1. Enemy is reported to be in vicinity.

2. Convoy of stores starts at 8.30 a.m. for FINGRINGHOE *vid* OLD HEATH.

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3. I am ordered to escort the convoy with my force, as per margin, until it has passed DONYLAND HEATH, and if enemy attacks to beat him off.

*One squadron.*
*One battalion.*
*One section F.A.*
*Two sections M.I.*
*Half bearer co.*

4. Cavalry will reconnoitre widely to west, south, and east, and report quickly as to presence, movements, and strength of enemy. After this, will concentrate on dangerous flank. One troop to act with convoy and keep up lateral touch with covering party.

5. Mounted infantry will advance rapidly and occupy high ground near DONYLAND LODGE, commanding BIRCH BROOK BRIDGE.

6. Infantry will furnish three companies as immediate escort for convoy (with troop added), to march by OLD HEATH—FINGRINGHOE Road. Half a company to form escort for guns. Rest of infantry to form covering party.

7. Artillery will march in front of convoy until covering party is detached, when the best available position must be taken up to support the infantry.

8. Bearer company will follow the convoy, but will halt at CANNOCK MILL and form a dressing-station.

9. I shall be with the covering party.

(Sd.) O.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

The convoy was arranged to start at the earliest moment permitted by the instructions, viz. 8.30 a.m., as it would have to move by a circuitous route through COLCHESTER to

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avoid steep gradients. A few moments before starting, MAJOR O. assembled the officers in charge of units and addressed a few words to them. He appointed an officer to command the convoy and immediate escort, recommending that the troop and one company should form the advanced guard, the other two companies rearguard and guards for wagons. The troop would carefully look out for ambuscades front and flanks, and would preserve lateral touch with the covering force or other troops on flank; not going too fast ahead, but rather keeping the convoy slightly behind the covering body, which would get between the wagons and the enemy as soon as the latter was located. The mounted infantry were to be sure to conceal themselves well, and not to show their force until necessary to delay the enemy. The covering party was to secure the safe passage of the convoy, and not to be drawn to attack the enemy at a disadvantage by any bluff on his part. The cavalry to be quick in searching out the enemy, and in sending back word of his probable line of attack.

The officers said they quite understood the plan of the COMMANDER, and the wagons moved off at 8.30 a.m. At 8.45 a.m. the remainder of the Northern Force left the rendezvous in accordance with the conditions laid down. The three companies with the convoy were Nos. 1, 2, and 3. Half of No. 4 Company was escort for the guns, and the remaining four and a half companies formed the covering body.

The cavalry and mounted infantry cantered off, and broke into an occasional gallop when the ground was open, the cavalry to reconnoitre, and the mounted infantry to seize the high ground at DONYLAND LODGE. The

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mounted infantry had to choose between a longer concealed route and a more exposed short route, and selected the latter, being ready to scatter and disappear if they saw the enemy or were seen by him on their way. They reached DONYLAND LODGE at 9.5 a.m., and just had time to dismount and conceal their horses and themselves, when they noticed a mounted man on the skyline near CABBAGE HALL FARM. They thought him one of their own cavalry scouts looking out over the plain, but were mistaken in their surmise. A sharp non-commissioned officer with a good pair of field-glasses identified the observer as a foe, and information to this effect was at once sent off to the officer commanding covering party and to the convoy. The solitary horseman at the farm, after a few minutes' observation, turned round rapidly and disappeared.

At 9.15 a.m. the covering party detached itself from the convoy, passed through the NORTH-WEST GATE at MIDDLEWICK on the ranges, with a view of concealing their movements behind the BUTTS; the convoy and escort at this hour were nearing WHITEHALL, previous to the descent to ST. BARNABAS' CHURCH, and up again to OLD HEATH.

At 9.21 a.m. the covering party apparently came into view of troops occupying CABBAGE HALL FARM, a few shots from this direction being fired.

The Northern Force COMMANDER now received a report from a scout, and also a message from DONYLAND LODGE. The scout reported he had seen some of the enemy's cavalry scouts near CABBAGE HALL FARM, and also sighted a body of horsemen galloping hard in the field north of the cross-road leading to COLCHESTER—ABBERTON road to WHITE BARN at 9.18 a.m. The messenger from the

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mounted infantry reported the hostile cavalry scout seen at CABBAGE HALL FARM. It became evident that the enemy was both at CABBAGE HALL FARM and at WHITE BARN.

At 9.23 a.m. a messenger from the convoy gave its exact position at 9.15 a.m. as near the lodge of WHITEHALL.

At 9.25 a.m., as the bullets from CABBAGE HALL FARM were beginning to seriously annoy the Blue infantry, a half-company, No. 4, was told off to reply to this fire from the shelter of one of the BUTTS. The remainder of the infantry battalion, Nos. 5, 6, 7, and 8 Companies, all of whom had reached the BUTTS, commenced to move, not without attracting increased fire from the hostile force at the farm, into the best available position, extending from the BUTTS on the right to DONYLAND CROSS ROADS on the left. No. 5 Company took the right of the position, half the company being extended in the firing line, and half in support. No. 6 Company was on the left of the position similarly disposed, the support being not far on its left flank from DONYLAND LODGE, and in touch with the mounted infantry, which was hidden behind the high ground at that point. No. 7 Company was disposed as local reserve in a sheltered place behind the left of the position. The half of No. 4 Company was a local reserve at the BUTTS, and No. 8 Company was posted behind the BUTTS as general reserve. The position faced the directions from which the enemy as now located might be expected to advance. It also—and this was most important—enabled a hand to be extended to the mounted infantry near DONYLAND LODGE, upon which force rested the principal responsibility for immediately covering the

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convoy, now soon to reach OLD HEATH. The COMMANDER of the Northern Force hoped the enemy's scouts would not hit off the convoy, as if they failed to do so there was no reason to suppose the enemy would be aware of its existence.

The Northern artillery did not come yet into action. It got behind the eastward BUTT, ready to take its place on the right of the position, when it should be necessary for it to open fire.

By 9.40 a.m. the Blue convoy force had completed its arrangements for protecting the advance of the convoy, and the guns, coming from behind the BUTT, opened fire upon CABBAGE HALL FARM, to which the guns of the Red Force immediately replied. The efforts of the companies of the Blue Force, on the left of the position, were directed to assist the mounted infantry on the high ground near DONYLAND LODGE to turn out the enemy's troops from WHITE BARN. The infantry on the right of the Blue position, and the guns, were employed in keeping down the fire from CABBAGE HALL FARM, which was now very much increased.

### *Narrative. Western Force (Red).*

The General Idea and Special Idea[1] for Western Force were handed to MAJOR E. at BOTTLE END, to which place the COMMANDER of the Red Force, accompanied by a section of mounted infantry, had ridden forward, arriving at 8.15 a.m. The remainder of the Advanced Guard, one squadron of cavalry, one battalion of infantry, and two

[1] For Special Idea of Western Force, see page 183.

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field artillery guns, with the half bearer company, came up at 8.30 a.m.

MAJOR E. proceeded to consider the situation with the aid of his map. He saw in the Special Idea that he was expected to seize CABBAGE HALL FARM and WHITE BARN; also to block the COLCHESTER—ABBERTON road on the west side, and the COLCHESTER—FINGRINGHOE road on the east side, of the GOVERNMENT GROUND. CABBAGE HALL FARM appeared to be the supporting point of a possible position about the 100-feet contour line facing north-east, and running in a north-westerly and south-easterly direction across the westernmost of the two roads, commanding the bridge crossing the BIRCH BROOK and the valley at this point. WHITE BARN was also the supporting point of a lower position, 50 feet to 75 feet altitude, blocking the easternmost road and dominating the bridge over the BIRCH BROOK, which here spanned the stream in a hollow at 27 feet level. The lower position seemed to be distant from DONYLAND LODGE about 300 to 400 yards. The garrison evacuating COLCHESTER would probably be met in the vicinity of these positions. It would be his duty to find out what the enemy was about, and then attack him. Meantime he would keep his force in hand, and wait for information before committing it to any course of action. The following "operation orders" were then written and issued:—

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**Advanced Guard Orders; by O. Cg. Western Force (Red).**

No. 1. BOTTLE END,
To Os. Cg. Units. *June* 15, 19—, 8.40 *a.m.*

1. Enemy is reported to be evacuating COLCHESTER.

2. Two more battalions will reinforce us at BLACKHEATH FARM by 10 a.m.

3. I intend with my force, as per margin, to block roads leading south from COLCHESTER, and to capture CABBAGE HALL FARM and WHITE BARN.

*One squadron.*
*One battalion.*
*One section F.A.*
*One section M.I.*
*Half bearer co.*

4. Cavalry will send two troops to occupy CABBAGE HALL FARM. Support by infantry will follow. Remainder of squadron will reconnoitre north-east and south. Scouts can go out at 8.50 a.m.

5. Mounted infantry will advance to seize WHITE BARN. Support by infantry will follow.

6. Infantry will move off in advanced guard formation *vid* MAYPOLE and BLACKHEATH FARMS, one company detached to left as flank guard.

7. Artillery will accompany main guard.

8. Bearer company will follow the column.

9. All troops will march at 9 a.m. (except cavalry scouts) I shall be with the van-guard.

(Sd.) E.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

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Before the troops marched off, MAJOR E. explained verbally to the officers in command of units what he intended to carry out. He begged the cavalry to send him early information, as all would depend upon this. The mounted infantry, he thought, should strengthen their position at WHITE BARN, if time allowed of this being done. They must keep in touch with the post at CABBAGE HALL FARM, but above all things must be well concealed.

The commander of the infantry battalion now detailed No. 1 Company as van guard, and No. 2 Company as flank guard. At 9 a.m. the Red troops left BOTTLE END, the cavalry scouts having already gone on at 8.50 a.m., and by 9.17 a.m. the mounted infantry passed SUNNYMEAD on the COLCHESTER—ABBERTON road, having lost no time on the way. At the cross-road they were able to get on to the plateau south of CABBAGE HALL FARM, and changed the trot for the gallop.

By the same hour the Red cavalry were well scattered in their reconnoitring quest, except the two troops for CABBAGE HALL FARM, which were coming up from BLACKHEATH FARM to seize upon this post. The Red infantry were approaching MAYPOLE FARM, upon which the van guard had just touched.

At 9.20 a.m. the COMMANDER of the Western Force was near BERECHURCH HALL PLANTATION, when distant shots were heard to the east. At this time also a cavalry scout came in, who stated, "I saw two or three troopers of enemy's cavalry near CABBAGE HALL FARM. Nothing else to be seen."

At 9.28 a.m. the firing out east appeared to be getting



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hotter, and the COMMANDER reached the pond by ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, his men stepping out well. As an engagement appeared imminent, MAJOR E. sent back an order to the bearer company to fix a dressing-station near BERECHURCH HALL.

At 9.30 a.m. two messengers arrived; one from CABBAGE HALL FARM to say Red cavalry in possession. Had seen and fired at large body of Blue infantry, which came in the open on rifle ranges. Also heard shooting from DONYLAND LODGE, probably enemy engaged with Red mounted infantry at WHITE BARN. The other messenger was from WHITE BARN to say mounted infantry were holding the post. Strong body of troops of enemy at DONYLAND LODGE; reinforcements wanted at WHITE BARN.

The advanced guard continued to move briskly along the road, and at 9.40 a.m. its leading scouts arrived at the smithy on COLCHESTER—ABBERTON road. Here a temporary halt took place while the tail of the column moved up.

The COMMANDER had now to decide what action to take. Both CABBAGE HALL FARM and WHITE BARN were engaged, as could be told by the sound of firing, as well as by further messages received from both posts. From the reports the COMMANDER thought the main strength of the enemy was over towards the east side, direction of DONYLAND LODGE, and if he had to block the east road he must certainly reinforce WHITE BARN as soon as possible. But he must also, according to his instructions, block the western road, and that entailed reinforcing CABBAGE HALL FARM post. The question for decision was whether he could do both with the force at his disposal, and in the absence of more detailed information as to the enemy. He did not want

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to split up his force too much, which might make him weak everywhere. He finally decided to make sure of blocking the west road by the CABBAGE HALL FARM position, to reinforce WHITE BARN with two companies, and watch results. He accordingly directed the commander of the infantry to send two companies to CABBAGE HALL FARM, two companies to WHITE BARN, and to keep four companies in reserve at the smithy. One of these latter was the company which had been out as a flank guard, but was now recalled. The guns he also sent on at a trot to follow the road to CABBAGE HALL FARM.

The reinforcements reached CABBAGE HALL FARM by 9.45 a.m., when the Red guns got into position under cover, and the infantry, Nos. 3 and 4 Companies, joined the garrison of dismounted cavalry in replying to the enemy's fire, which was now directed upon the post from the Blue Force in position between the BUTTS and DONYLAND LODGE. The companies of the reserve, Nos. 2, 5, 6, and 7, were shortly brought up from the smithy and posted behind the farm. The two companies of infantry, Nos. 1 and 8, for WHITE BARN proceeded meantime by road *vid* SUNNYMEAD and ROMAN HILL FARM, thence across country under shelter of the ground. The Western Force COMMANDER hoped they would get in time to enable the east road to be blocked.

### *General Narrative.*

It was now 9.50 a.m., and the action became general. The COMMANDER of the Western Force had found out exactly where the Northern Force was placed, and had occupied an

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opposing position with his troops on the 100-feet contour at CABBAGE HALL FARM, to block the west road. He had also taken the best steps in his power for reinforcing his post at WHITE BARN, in order to block the east road. In these respects he was carrying out his instructions, and it may be remarked that he knew nothing as yet about a convoy being covered by his antagonist's movements.

By 9.55 a.m. the troops on each side were hotly engaged, and so far as the positions at MIDDLEWICK and CABBAGE HALL FARM were concerned, the UMPIRES could not see that one side was superior to the other. The two companies, however, sent to reinforce WHITE BARN were unable to reach the post till just this hour, by which time the garrison at WHITE BARN, having suffered heavily from the opposing Blue Force at DONYLAND LODGE, was now fairly driven out by an advance of the Blue troops over BIRCH BROOK BRIDGE to cover the passage of the convoy. Under the impulse of this forward move, not only was the original garrison of mounted infantry at WHITE BARN borne back, but the two infantry companies also coming up in relief were forced to yield to superior force. The advanced guard of the convoy joined in the action, and the way for the wagons to pass was cleared without difficulty. The convoy passed the IPSWICH ARMS PUBLIC HOUSE at 9.55 a.m., and the UMPIRES, on this being reported, ordered the "Cease fire" to sound.

### *Summing up.*

The COMMANDERS on either side and the UMPIRES, together with the commanders of units, being assembled

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at MIDDLEWICK round the standard of the CHIEF UMPIRE, MAJOR E. and MAJOR O. were requested to state their respective cases, neither of the ASSISTANT UMPIRES having any remarks to make.

MAJOR E., in command of the Western Force, said that on arriving at the smithy, COLCHESTER—ABBERTON road, he had to decide very quickly upon the situation as it then presented itself, and make up his mind what to do. CABBAGE HALL FARM was in action on the left, and WHITE BARN on the right, and the latter had been in need of reinforcement for some time. He had to think of these posts first, but how much help to give them respectively, without unduly separating and weakening his force, was a difficult problem to solve. He did not know the exact strength of the enemy's force near DONYLAND LODGE, but he had been told by his scouts that a number of troops had gone that way from the rifle butts. He also knew that he would himself receive reinforcement at BLACKHEATH FARM by 10 a.m. Hence he determined to send as strong a reinforcement as he could possibly spare at once to WHITE BARN, where it must be urgently wanted, and trust eventually to his main force being supported by additional troops in time to prevent it being driven back from CABBAGE HALL FARM. He did not know of any time limit to his blocking of the roads, and he expected to have been able to stop the passage of the far one later in the forenoon when he was reinforced. He complained of not having more mounted infantry allowed him, which would have enabled him to hold WHITE BARN with a stronger garrison, and he pointed out that the distance from BOTTLE END was against him, so long as he chiefly depended on

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slow-marching troops. Finally, the RED COMMANDER represented that he got no information either from his Special Idea or from his scouts of the presence of a convoy, and that he never knew there was one to be stopped until he heard the "Cease fire" sound.

MAJOR O., in command of the Northern Force, said his difficulty was in deciding the strength of his adversary. He perceived a good deal of firing was going on, but as the concealed enemy did not show up, he hardly knew what he was fighting against. He found the dropping fire from CABBAGE HALL FARM annoying, so detached a company to keep it down, but he did not make this force stronger, thinking that the fire from the farm was perhaps a bluff on the part of the enemy to mislead him as to their true position. He recognized the fact early in the day that he had no time to lose in getting his convoy through, and if it had been delayed at the passage of the BROOK, it would have been fatal to his success. This was his excuse for pushing forward his infantry across the open to DONYLAND LODGE, and leaving the shelter of the rifle butts. The troops had worked well, and he had no complaints to make.

The CHIEF UMPIRE said he thought both COMMANDERS had used their wits to good effect, but the leader of the Northern Force had double the strength of mounted infantry allotted to his adversary, which gave him an advantage. Blue placed his troops in the right place for protecting the advance of the convoy.

Red had, no doubt, a hard nut to crack when he got to the smithy and received his further reports. He apparently decided rightly in electing to make certain

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in any case of blocking one of the two routes in question, and it would have made no difference in the result had he attempted to take the whole of his force to WHITE BARN. The convoy would have got through just the same.

The various arms were fairly well handled, and the scouting, information, and communication were as well looked after as could be expected with the partially trained young soldiers available. Had there been some more seasoned reconnoitrers in the Western Force, it might have been expected that the presence of the convoy on the scene of operations would have been reported to MAJOR E. What the result would have been in that case it is difficult to say.

## *Comments.*

Amongst the many points of interest in this fight, we may note the advantage of having sufficient mobile infantry to get hold of the important points, the strength depending on the natural strength of the posts to be seized, on the force likely to dispute the points on part of the enemy, and on the distance from the start of the respective objectives; more men being required to hold such points if a long way off than if they are close and can be easily reinforced or relieved.

It is remarkable, also, in this scheme how little was known by each COMMANDER of his opponent's strength. In real warfare one is inclined to believe this would not have been the case. Red, at all events, being in his own country, would have had means of gaining intelligence, which would probably have kept him fully aware, not only of Blue's

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strength, but also of the exact arrangements connected with the convoy, enabling the Red COMMANDER to make accurate calculation of the place and time for cutting it off. Blue also, as the invader, must have had an intelligence department or secret service, well organized and well paid, which would not have allowed the COMMANDER of the convoy escort to act in the dark, as shown in the exercise.

Taking the case, however, as it actually occurred, there is a question of interest to which the CHIEF UMPIRE does not allude, and that is whether it were possible, under the conditions given, for Red to have stopped the convoy at all, even if he had been aware of its existence and of the line of march it followed. We may take the rate of march of the wagons at two and a half miles an hour at the outside, and the distance from the ABBEY FIELD to the IPSWICH ARMS P. H. at the north-east corner of DONYLAND HEATH, by the route taken, is as nearly as possible three miles. This would bring the convoy, starting at 8.30 a.m., to the IPSWICH ARMS by 9.42 a.m. But we have it in the narrative that at 9.15 a.m. it had only reached the lodge of WHITEHALL, probably owing to some delay at steep gradients. From this point to the IPSWICH ARMS is one mile and a half, which would take 36 minutes at the normal rate of march, bringing the time for passing the PUBLIC HOUSE to 9.15 plus 36 minutes, or 9.51 a.m. The question then is, could Red have got a force to WHITE BARN by or before that hour, sufficient to block and command the road, and stop the passage over the BROOK of the convoy? The answer to this is that the Red infantry could not have got there in time to have been f any service. The distance from BOTTLE END to WHITE

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BARN by road is three and a half miles, which at the full pace of four miles per hour lately authorized for rapid marching of infantry, with a start at 9 a.m., would not allow the companies to reach the latter place before 9.52 a.m. But at this hour, as will have been seen in the narrative, the convoy was crossing the bridge, supported by any number of troops from DONYLAND LODGE, and affairs at WHITE BARN generally were adverse to the Red Force. Even the arrival of four instead of two companies of the latter would have made no difference in the result. Therefore the only way in which Red could have even attempted to effectually stop up the eastern road, would have been by sending on the whole of his mounted troops to WHITE BARN at once; placing the guns when they arrived on or about the 100-feet contour just west of WHITE BARN, whence they could command the approach to the BIRCH BROOK BRIDGE on the north bank of the stream.

To do this, it would have been necessary to abandon the idea of holding the west road until, at all events, the infantry could come up. Thus it will be seen that, even if Red had been aware from the beginning of the exact conditions of the tactical operation about to commence, he had an almost impossible task given him to carry out; but if he had acted as here suggested, and sent on his mounted troops to head the convoy, it would have been the best effort he could make; for undoubtedly the stopping of the convoy was the most important part of the business; the blocking up of the west road being comparatively of less consequence. Whether Red's force of one section mounted infantry, two guns, and one and a half troop of cavalry

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(the other half troop being presumably with the guns) could hold position at WHITE BARN against the force at Blue's disposal, even for a limited time, is extremely doubtful, but the attempt might, at all events, have been made, as the only possible method open to the Western Force of stopping the convoy before it reached the north-east corner of DONYLAND HEATH.

The risk of exposing troops moving into position on partially open spaces to an enemy's fire is touched upon in connection with Blue's movement on taking up his ground. Such risks have sometimes to be taken when there is urgent necessity for the move.

The artillery on each side in this affair had to be carefully concealed, owing to the only available positions being within such close range of each other; it was therefore necessary to avert, or at all events postpone as long as possible, the heavy loss of gunners which must follow on an interchange of fire at such close quarters.

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# L.

## TACTICAL OPERATION AT COLCHESTER.

(*See Maps* 5, 6.)

ATTACK AND DEFENCE.

*August* 30, 19—.

THE General and Special Ideas of this scheme have been set by an officer well acquainted with the COLCHESTER training-ground, and are partly based on the conditions of an exercise carried out with troops at COLCHESTER in 1894, and given in the Blue Book Report of 1895. The various steps of the operation have now been worked out, war-game fashion, on the map, and have also been carefully checked and tested on the ground.

### *General Idea.*

A Blue invading force has landed a party of troops near the mouth of the RIVER COLNE with intention of seizing COLCHESTER.

The officer commanding the Red defending force at COLCHESTER sends a party of troops to stop the Blue invaders.

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*Special Idea. Northern Force (Red).*

Information is received on the morning of August 30, 19—, that a Blue Force has landed at BROOK HALL and threatens COLCHESTER. The garrison is not large, and when it has furnished a covering force, there only remain in the town a few details and non-combatants. The covering force consists of one battalion of infantry with machine gun, one squadron of cavalry, and one battery of field artillery, with a half bearer company added. The COMMANDER is ordered to move out to stop the enemy's advance.

*Special Idea. Southern Force (Blue).*

A Blue Force has landed at BROOK HALL on the evening of August 29, 19—, and sends forward an advanced guard, consisting of one battalion of infantry with machine gun, two squadrons of cavalry, one battery of field artillery, and a half bearer company, to the ROMAN RIVER. The advanced guard bivouacs near FINGRINGHOE. The following morning the COMMANDER receives this order—

"BROOK HALL, *August* 30, 8 *a.m.*

"I hear that the force covering COLCHESTER is very weak. I wish you to make a determined effort to get past it and hold the town, if possible, by midday. Do not move off too early, as I should like to get up within striking distance, in case of your requiring help.

"V.,

"COLONEL."

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N.B.—Northern Force to rendezvous at 10 a.m. at western end of MIDDLEWICK, and can move off at 10.20 a.m., at which hour cavalry may proceed to reconnoitre. The rest of the force must not be further south than the northern border of DONYLAND HEATH before 10.45 a.m. MAJOR A. to command this force.

Southern Force to rendezvous at 10.15 a.m. at the cross-roads, FINGRINGHOE, and may move off, the cavalry at 10.40 a.m., the rest of the force at 10.45 a.m. MAJOR B. to command this force.

Topographical Hints:—BROOK HALL is situated about half a mile west of the right bank of the COLNE, a little more than a mile S.S.E. of the point where the ROMAN RIVER joins the COLNE. FINGRINGHOE is on the ROMAN RIVER about a mile from where it runs into the COLNE.

*Narrative. Northern Force (Red).*

At 9.45 a.m. on August 30 MAJOR A. was at the north-west gate of MIDDLEWICK, which is about a quarter of a mile south of COCKWATCH FARM on the COLCHESTER—ABBERTON road. He was here handed the General Idea and also the Special Idea for the Red Force by an ASSISTANT UMPIRE, and at once proceeded to a quiet spot to consider the situation. This presented itself to his mind in the following fashion. The enemy, not in large force, had landed south of FINGRINGHOE, near BROOK HALL; if he was advancing, which seemed by the Special Idea to be the case, he must be stopped; but first of all it would be necessary to find out how strong he was, and what was his line of advance.

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Looking at the map, there were two avenues of approach from FINGRINGHOE—that by DONYLAND LODGE and OLD HEATH, passing east of the manœuvre ground; and that by MANWOOD BRIDGE and ROMAN HILL FARM, crossing the BIRCH BROOK west of the rifle ranges. In order to make a certainty of stopping the invader, both routes should be defended, and this object could possibly be effected by selecting a position which would cover both roads. Such a place might be found in a somewhat retired portion of the manœuvre ground, with a good field for guns and rifles and strong flanks. The orders for the Northern Force were to attack if in sufficient strength. If the position indicated were taken up, a portion of the force might be sent to the front to offer battle as it were, to delay the enemy's progress, and then by judicious movements to lure him on to the well-concealed main position prepared to receive him. The advanced force in the retrograde movement might cause preliminary loss to the enemy by fighting him in rear-guard fashion, and, at all events, could make him show his strength and the composition of his force, which should thus be fully disclosed by the time the Southern Force was able to develop its attack on the main portion of the Northern troops.

The best position to enable this plan to be carried out appeared to MAJOR A. to lie right across the manœuvre ground; roughly, from the high ground between DONYLAND LODGE and OLD HEATH to the west across the south side of the BUTTS, with a good place for artillery 50 yards or so west of the western BUTT. To the south and right of the field of fire from such a position lay the more elevated ground (100-feet contour line) to the south and south-east of

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CABBAGE HALL FARM, with lower features to its east side as far as the BIRCH BROOK, and in the direction of the DONYLAND HEATH four cross-roads situated on the eastern main route. On the north bank of the BROOK the left of the position first named had rising ground, about 75-feet level, near DONYLAND LODGE CROSS-ROADS. This was likely to prove an important point in the operations.

It was, however, necessary, before completely formulating his own scheme, for the Northern COMMANDER to consider what the enemy was likely to do, and by which road he would probably come. On the whole it appeared to MAJOR A. that the FINGRINGHOE—OLD HEATH route was the most direct and offered more concealment than the ABBERTON road, the latter especially being much exposed to fire from the top of the BUTTS; the chances were therefore much in favour of the Southern Force advancing by the OLD HEATH road.

At 10.15 a.m. the following "operation orders" were issued:—

**Defence Orders; by O. Cg. Northern Force (Red).**

No. 1. MIDDLEWICK,
To Os. Cg. Units. *August* 30, 19—, 10.15 *a.m.*

1. A small force of the enemy landed near BROOK HALL is reported to be moving on COLCHESTER.

2. I intend to stop the enemy at all costs, with the force under my command as per margin, by taking up a defensive position at the BUTTS

*One squadron.*
*One battery F.A.*
*One battalion.*
*Half bearer co.*

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3. Cavalry will reconnoitre towards FINGRINGHOE, and cover force from BLACKHEATH FARM to DONYLAND HEATH CROSS-ROADS, sending back news of enemy's line of advance. Special protection of my left flank necessary.

4. Infantry and guns will move forward in advanced-guard order as far as the BUTTS, where they will be halted to await final dispositions.

5. A dressing-station will be established at ST. GILES' RECTORY, near the COLCHESTER road.

6. I shall be with the guns.

(Sd.) A.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

The cavalry had a party of signallers with them, and were directed to establish communication back with the high ground near DONYLAND CROSS-ROADS, as soon as troops of the Red Force reached that point.

At 10.20 a.m. the cavalry galloped off on their quest of the enemy, and the main force was also put in motion, being preceded by a van guard of Nos. 1 and 2 Companies of the battalion in skirmishing formations, with scouts out front and flanks. No. 3 Company was detached as a left flank guard. The remainder of the battalion and the battery followed as a main guard.

The route taken from the north-west gate was across the rifle ranges, the leading company of the main guard being in small column formations, with scouts out on flanks. The company detached as flank guard was ordered to direct its course independently towards OLD HEATH road, and thence across the BIRCH BROOK BRIDGE in direction of DONYLAND HEATH CROSS ROADS.

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At 10.30 a.m. the main body of the battalion and the guns halted behind C Butt ready to take up a position south of the Butts, when thought advisable. The leading van guard company, having a signalling party with it, went cautiously on towards Donyland Cross-roads (where the roads form a T just west of Donyland Lodge). By 10.45 a.m. the company, No. 1, had taken up a concealed position near the high ground (75-feet level) close to the Cross-roads, and their signallers read a message from the advanced cavalry to effect that the enemy was approaching from Fingringhoe by the Donyland Heath Cross-roads, and that the Red cavalry had dismounted at north edge of the Heath to try and stop the advance.

This news being transmitted rapidly to the Commander at C Butt, two companies, Nos. 2 and 4, were pushed forward in support of No. 1 Company at the Donyland Lodge Cross-roads, so that this post might be strong enough to hold its own. The reinforcement reached the cross roads at 11.5 a.m. It was understood that the main body, consisting of Nos. 5, 6, 7, and 8 Companies, backing up the advanced troops, which in their turn supported the flank guard company No. 3 sent still further on, would remain at the Butts until a general advance became necessary, or until the enemy had been induced to threaten an attack, upon which the Red troops would adjust their position and bring their guns into action. The half-battalion, together with the artillery, was therefore kept for the present in reserve behind the Butts.

At the same hour, 11.5 a.m., information was received of the flank guard company having gone through Old



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HEATH VILLAGE and down the road to BIRCH BROOK BRIDGE. It had as yet seen nothing of the enemy. The COMMANDER of the Northern Force now knew that he had four companies and a squadron forward in such positions as would enable strong preliminary resistance to be made against an enemy coming up from FINGRINGHOE. About this time firing was heard in the direction of DONYLAND HEATH.

At 11.10 a.m. news came that some hostile infantry had got on to DONYLAND HEATH amongst the trees which grew freely in that spot, and that cavalry was seen coming up on the south side of the HEATH. Soon after this more firing was heard from this direction.

At 11.18 a.m. information came by scouts from the COLCHESTER—ABBERTON road that a hostile troop was patrolling from MANWOOD BRIDGE to the BIRCH BROOK, but there were no signs of any other of the enemy's forces on that flank.

At 11.20 a.m. it was reported that two or three companies of Blue infantry were to be seen on the north side of DONYLAND HEATH, and it was evident that the Red dismounted cavalry had been driven out from the border of close ground where they had established themselves.

An urgent written order was now sent to DONYLAND LODGE CROSS-ROADS to desire the senior officer present to assume command of the four advanced companies, and "to delay the enemy on the high ground, or in passing over the BROOK as might seem best, as long as possible, falling back stubbornly on the main position if forced to do so; the flank-guard company to be retired in such case *viâ* OLD HEATH to guard the extreme left." This order

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reached DONYLAND LODGE CROSS-ROADS at 11.26 a.m., being transmitted by cyclist messenger.

At 11.25 a.m., the enemy's artillery being sighted near DONYLAND HEATH, at about 1400 yards' distance from the BUTTS, the guns of the Northern Force drew up clear of the western BUTT and unlimbered. The Blue guns had already opened fire with shrapnel at that range on Red infantry, but the Red guns promptly took up the challenge, an interchange of fire between the two batteries being the result.

The Blue troops of the other arms continued to advance, and by 11.30 a.m. the fight was in course of full development.

### *Narrative. Southern Force (Blue).*

At 9.50 a.m. MAJOR B. was at FINGRINGHOE VILLAGE, and was handed a copy of the General Idea, and also of the Special Idea[1] for the Southern Force, by an ASSISTANT UMPIRE. MAJOR B. delegated to his Staff Officer the task of seeing that his force arrived by 10.15 a.m. at the rendezvous, and he himself repaired to the bar parlour of the village inn, and, laying out his map before him, examined the ground over which he had got to move and considered the situation.

His thoughts were somewhat as follows. The Special Idea ordered him to seize COLCHESTER before noon. This was rather a large order; but he would try and get into the town as soon as he could. His troops were not to be allowed to move off until 10.45 a.m., which gave him only

[1] For Special Idea of Southern Force, see page 204.

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one and a quarter hours to fight his way into COLCHESTER; time enough if no opposition occurred, but not enough if his advance was hindered by a determined enemy.

The question was, where would he be likely to come across his adversary? The Red Force might, if opposition was intended, be at that moment in the DONYLAND WOODS, or perhaps it would be placed to catch him passing beyond these woods, or even further back towards COLCHESTER. In any case, he must take the shortest road, as time was pressing, *vid* OLD HEATH, and would look to his cavalry to help him to locate the enemy, and, above all, to prevent his getting into an ambush with his main force in this closely cultivated and wooded country. There was an especially nasty-looking place shown by the map about BIRCH BROOK BRIDGE, on the way to DONYLAND LODGE and OLD HEATH. He must find artillery positions as he went along, for he was a stranger in this country, and, all the inhabitants being hostile, he could not anticipate getting any trustworthy information out of them, either as to the country or as to the enemy. The ground being everywhere so flat, it was difficult to tell from the map alone what points would be of value as positions. The outline of his plan would be, however, to hold the opposing enemy, wherever he should find him, with infantry and guns, whilst his cavalry made a flank march and slipped into COLCHESTER before the hour named in the Special Idea.

The following "operation orders" were drafted and issued:—

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**March Orders ; by O. Cg. Southern Force (Blue).**

No. 1. FINGRINGHOE,
To Os. Cg. Units. *August* 30, 19—, 10.20 *a.m.*

1. A small force of the enemy is covering COLCHESTER.

2. I intend to push on, with my command as per margin, towards COLCHESTER, to seize the town.

*Two squadrons.*
*One battery.*
*One battalion.*
*Half bearer co.*

3. Cavalry will reconnoitre and let me know where enemy is to be found. The squadrons may move off at 10.40 a.m.

4. The rest of the force will march at 10.45 a.m. Two companies will respectively form advanced guard and left flank guard. Half a company will act as escort to artillery. The main body, with artillery, will follow under protection of the advanced and flank guard companies, and form up under cover of DONYLAND HEATH.

5. The bearer company will form a dressing-station at FINGRINGHOE BRIDGE.

6. I shall be at head of main column.

(Sd.) B.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

The plan of the COMMANDER was further explained to the cavalry officer in charge, who was directed to look out for a favourable moment for getting round the flank of the opposing force (probably by the OLD HEATH road) when the engagement expected between the main bodies took

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place; thus making his way into COLCHESTER before mid-day, with as much cavalry as he could concentrate by the time in question. The squadrons moved off at 10.40 a.m.

At 10.45 a.m. the Blue Force was put in motion. No. 1 Company led the way as advanced guard, No. 2 Company was sent to the left as flank guard, and half of No. 3 Company was escort for the guns. At 10.55 a.m. the first report was received from the advanced patrol of cavalry by MAJOR B., who had now arrived near the south side of DONYLAND HEATH. It was to the effect that the northern part of the HEATH was occupied by Red dismounted cavalry. The enemy was also reported to be at MIDDLEWICK in strength.

Orders were now sent to the Blue cavalry, which was out on the right flank, to detach a troop to watch the left flank, especially the COLCHESTER—ABBERTON road. The remainder to continue to concentrate on the right flank, ready for a forward movement.

The Blue infantry advanced guard, which had reached the south border of DONYLAND HEATH, now pushed on through the scattered trees and cleared it right through, backed up by half of No. 3 Company from the main body. This was effected by 11.10 a.m.; the Red cavalry falling back and recovering their horses, and then riding away towards the BIRCH BROOK, leaving the Blue infantry companies in full possession of DONYLAND HEATH.

MAJOR B., who was with the rest of the infantry and the artillery on the south side of the HEATH, when the foregoing was reported to him, issued orders for attack.

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**Attack Orders; by O. Cg. Southern Force (Blue).**

No. 2. DONYLAND HEATH,
To Os. Cg. Units. *August* 30, 19—, 11.15 *a.m.*

1. The enemy is occupying MIDDLEWICK with infantry and guns.

2. I intend to attack him on the east flank, so as to force him back towards the line of the BUTTS.

3. Our cavalry will then work round his left, and push in to COLCHESTER.

4. The guns will find a position on the north side of DONYLAND HEATH to support my infantry attack.

5. The BIRCH BROOK is fordable in many places.

6. I shall be with the guns.

(Sd.) B.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing, and copy by orderly to cavalry.

At 11.20 a.m. the Blue infantry moved forward, the cavalry being in touch on extreme right, and the guns on the road east of DONYLAND HEATH. When the infantry had advanced north of the HEATH, the leading companies working in very extended order, the field battery was brought up past the IPSWICH ARMS P. H. at the CROSS-ROADS, and unlimbering in a field about 150 to 200 yards N.W. of the INN, opened fire at a range of about 1400 yards on the hostile force at MIDDLEWICK, the target being, however, not very clear.

The Red guns were, nevertheless, drawn out of their hidden position behind the BUTTS, and, coming into action about 50 yards west of the westernmost BUTT, they replied

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to the fire of the Blue artillery. The exchange of fire took place shortly before half-past eleven o'clock. The Blue guns were better concealed, by the lie of the ground, than the Red guns, the latter having an open green as a background.

As the Blue infantry advanced, it found itself unexpectedly under rifle fire from BIRCH GROVE. The RED CAVALRY, it seemed, driven out of DONYLAND HEATH a short time back, had again rather rashly dismounted and taken position here. MAJOR B., by promptly bringing up a company to attack this small post, succeeded not only in driving out the defenders, who suffered a loss of half their number, but also cut them off from their led horses, which were captured. Their sudden opening of fire, however, at such short range had caused many casualties in the Blue infantry, and what was more serious, had killed a small proportion of the gunners and some of the horses of the field battery, which had just unlimbered, before a stop could be put to the attack. The remnant of the Red cavalry escaped from BIRCH GROVE on foot, and crossed the BROOK to the north bank at various places.

### *General Narrative.*

The Blue infantry now prepared to cross the BROOK, and at this stage the Red flank guard company, the men of which had advanced to the river and were carefully hidden on the north side of the bridge, seeing the formidable force about to move against them, thought it better to fall back without revealing their presence while there was still time for them to do so. They therefore quietly retired under

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cover of fences and irregularities of the ground, but not through OLD HEATH, as they had been specially ordered to do.

The Red dismounted cavalry, who got away from BIRCH GROVE and rejoined their main body at the BUTTS, were not received with open arms by the Northern commander, although they had done considerable damage to the enemy, because it was a great blow to him to be deprived of the bulk of his mounted force, on which he had greatly relied to guard his left flank. At this time he was not aware that the flank guard advanced company had neglected to occupy OLD HEATH in its retirement, which virtually left the OLD HEATH road to COLCHESTER open to the enemy, and made the matter much worse.

The Blue troops continued to advance, and encountered no further local resistance in crossing the stream. They moved up the OLD HEATH road and fields adjoining with great caution, taking all advantage possible of the large amount of cover afforded them by the ground. The Blue cavalry waited in a friendly hollow until the infantry had progressed well up towards DONYLAND LODGE and left the road clear. The Blue infantry spread themselves over an extended front after crossing the BROOK, and swept up to the high ground near DONYLAND LODGE, the four companies of Red infantry falling back before their superior strength, but slowly only, and contesting every inch of the ground. The Red COMMANDER evidently intended to make his principal stand at the BUTTS.

Meantime, as has been explained, arising from the action both of the Red cavalry and of the flank-guard company, the way to COLCHESTER became quite uncovered, and the

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Blue cavalry leader soon found this out by his scouts, and took advantage of it, as directed by his special orders. At 11.40 a.m. he made a dash over the BIRCH BROOK BRIDGE with his one and a half squadrons, and reached COLCHESTER by 11.50 a.m. without opposition.

The Blue infantry continued to follow the Red retiring companies across MIDDLEWICK, but when they reached within about 700 yards of the BUTTS, they suddenly came under a heavy rain of bullets from the centre of the Red position, a machine gun lying in wait for them being just pushed up clear of the BUTTS. The Blue troops suffered severe loss before they could silence the machine gun, which they did at last by bringing up their own Maxim into the front line. So far, therefore, as the local fight went, the Red infantry, having the cover afforded by the BUTTS, had at this stage a distinct advantage. Their artillery, however, had been rather worsted by the enemy's guns, owing to the more exposed position of the Red battery.

At a few minutes before noon the UMPIRES received information by cyclist messenger, who had scorched back the intervening distance in seven or eight minutes, that the Blue cavalry had reached COLCHESTER; they therefore considered it unnecessary to prolong the contest, and the "Cease fire" was accordingly ordered to be sounded.

## *Summing up.*

The CHIEF UMPIRE, ASSISTANT UMPIRES, the Red and Blue COMMANDERS, and the various troop leaders, having assembled at the FLAGSTAFF on MIDDLEWICK DRILL GROUND,

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each COMMANDER was asked to read his orders and to make any remarks he thought fit as to the movements on his side.

The COMMANDER of the Northern Force said the order he transmitted to DONYLAND LODGE CROSS-ROADS (which was received at 11.26 a.m.), desiring that the flank-guard company should be retired by OLD HEATH "to guard the extreme left," was not complied with. He might, perhaps, have worded the order more explicitly, but he meant it to be taken as a positive order and not a permissive one, and he relied on the presence of the flank guard company at OLD HEATH to support his cavalry, who were also, by a curious fatality, prevented from reaching this important point.

The COMMANDER of the Southern Force had nothing special to say. He submitted that he had carried out to the letter what he was told to execute; but he much regretted the error in allowing his battery to unlimber without an examination of the BIRCH GROVE in close vicinity, which concealed dismounted cavalry. His infantry, however, had redeemed the oversight promptly and well before much damage was done; his gunners, being also partially concealed behind slightly rising ground, had not suffered as much as might have been expected.

The ASSISTANT UMPIRE on the Red side said he thought the attack should preferably have been made by the COLCHESTER—ABBERTON road to the west side of DONYLAND WOOD and the rifle ranges, but the ASSISTANT UMPIRE on the Blue side took him up at once and differed from him, saying the west road was much too exposed to fire from the summits of the BUTTS.

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The CHIEF UMPIRE remarked that the Northern COMMANDER had made the most of his strong position, and had wisely kept the bulk of his troops in hand until he knew what the enemy was about. His object was no doubt to tempt the Blue Force on, by a slow retirement of the Red advanced troops, to attack the Red position at a disadvantage, until an opportunity occurred of giving a counter stroke which would dispose of his adversary. In doing this, however, he did not make sufficient provision for the safety of his left flank, and uncovered the road to COLCHESTER by faulty tactics as much as by misadventure.

The Southern COMMANDER had no easy task to perform, as the time given him for seizing upon COLCHESTER was extremely short, and it is doubtful, if the chapter of accidents had not assisted him, whether he could have brought his cavalry raid to a successful issue by noon. His plan was, however, a good one, and on the whole it was carried out well.

A great tactical error was committed in allowing the field battery to unlimber without BIRCH GROVE being previously examined. This should have been the duty of the infantry escort, but the artillery commander was not free from responsibility in the matter.

### *Comments.*

The weak point in the Northern Force leader's scheme was undoubtedly, as pointed out by the CHIEF UMPIRE, a failure to make his left flank perfectly safe while carrying out his other arrangements. Having once satisfied himself that the enemy's line of advance was by the OLD HEATH

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road, the tactical importance of OLD HEATH itself became at once supreme. It should have been garrisoned by at least two companies, and the Red cavalry should have received the clearest possible instructions as to falling back upon the same point, to add to the strength of its defenders when matters came to a crisis. If this had been done the rest of the Red COMMANDER'S plan might have been put into execution without mishap. He would have had six companies and his guns at the BUTTS, and would certainly have had an advantage at that protected position over the assailants, who were necessarily more or less exposed in their line of attack.

The minor tactical incident of the guns requires special notice. The omission to search BIRCH GROVE was a serious mistake, but it probably looked a most unlikely place for the hostile cavalry, just driven out of DONYLAND HEATH, to have occupied, and it was known that none of the enemy's infantry had been seen south of the BROOK. The Red cavalry were themselves unfortunate in their selection of this concealed post. It was much too close to their original position, and, having its back to the BROOK, was not an easy place to get away from, as was proved by the sequel. They, however, at the cost of sacrificing their own safety, were able to inflict some damage upon the Blue Force, and so they may be said to have scored a local success. It was, nevertheless, a great mistake on the part of the Red cavalry to have taken up a second position south of the BROOK. Their leader must have known the more important duty required of them, as the first orders issued to the cavalry of the Northern Force contained the injunction to take special measures all through the operations to

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cover the left flank. Such a misconception of the tactical situation on the part of a subordinate leader shows the great value of intelligent co-operation in the general scheme by all sub-leaders, however humble their rank, and that a want of grasp of the plan of operations may, by inducing a false move, have the unexpected effect of marring the whole scheme, however able the tactician who designed it may be.

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# M.

## TACTICAL OPERATION AT COLCHESTER.

(*See Maps* 5, 6.)

DEFENDING FORCE *v.* INVADING FORCE.

*November* 21, 19—.

THE General and Special Ideas of this Scheme have been set by an officer who knows the ground well. The movements have been worked out in the form of a war game, and each position taken up has also been verified by comparison with the ground. The scheme is typical of a possible operation, which the peculiar character of the COLCHESTER manœuvre ground conduces to render as a likely and interesting subject for a tactical exercise.

### *General Idea.*

A Blue invading force, having landed near the COLNE RIVER MOUTH at MERSEA ISLAND, is reported to be also pushing a small landing force up the COLNE RIVER towards COLCHESTER.

A Red defending force based on COLCHESTER has its outpost line to the north of the ROMAN RIVER and overlooking it.

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*Special Idea. Invading Force (Blue).*

"Headquarters, FLAGSHIP, MOUTH OF THE COLNE,
"*November* 20, 19—, 4 *p.m.*

"The O. Cg. detached force must, after landing at MERSEA ISLAND, advance by a night march to the south of the ROMAN RIVER. Here he will bivouac, and be prepared to move forward to-morrow morning in co-operation with the extreme right force, proceeding by flotilla to land at WIVENHOE. He should seize a tactical point of importance at once, at or near OLD HEATH, from which to cut off COLCHESTER'S eastward communications. Our main force will threaten the west side of COLCHESTER, crossing the ROMAN RIVER at KINGSFORD BRIDGE.

"Enemy is reported to be not fully mobilized, and still completing his preparations.

"By Order, W.,
"CHIEF OF STAFF."

*Addendum to Special Idea for Invading Force (Blue).*

In order to carry out the conception of this scheme, it will be necessary to assume certain preliminary movements to have taken place on the part of the invading force, before the narrative of the tactical operation takes up the story.

The Blue invaders had succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the Red fleet by a *ruse navale*, and, coming in on the top of the tide, had anchored off the MOUTH of the COLNE at 4 p.m. on November 20, 19—. They were now favoured,

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as they thought, by a heavy mist and a yellow November fog coming on, and set to work forthwith to disembark their landing forces.

By dint of good fortune, and also owing to the special training to which the troops had been subjected in practising similar landings, the whole of the force for MERSEA ISLAND was ashore by 10 p.m. The landing was quite unopposed, which may be attributed to the prevailing fog.

The other landing flotilla which was to co-operate by disembarking troops at a point near WIVENHOE, on the right bank of the COLNE, was now prepared for despatch by water, but it was not until 6.30 a.m., November 21, that this force was all aboard, and ready to push off against the ebbing tide in direction of WIVENHOE.

The land detachment from MERSEA ISLAND had a fatiguing and harassing night march, the way being lost owing to the guide mistaking his landmarks in the dark. When the force at length arrived at the place of rendezvous, FINGRINGHOE LODGE, it was found that the yellow November fog had greatly cleared away, the rain had also ceased, but a white surface mist prevailed; this was still thick in the valleys, whilst lighter over the uplands.

The troops now bivouacked for the remainder of the night, and took a needed rest.

The force, however, which had thus arrived at the ROMAN RIVER, had no information as to the whereabouts of the detachment advancing up the COLNE. Minute arrangements had been made to keep up communication with the water party by the double means of signalling lamps and cyclist orderlies, but both methods proved



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ineffective in the foggy weather which prevailed. The water detachment had been timed to arrive at WIVENHOE about the same hour that the land party from MERSEA ISLAND reached the ROMAN RIVER, but unfortunately the touch was lost.

*Special Idea. Defending Force (Red).*

"COLCHESTER,
"*November* 21, 19—, 2 *a.m.*

"A detached force as follows: one squadron, one battalion, one section field artillery, and two infantry machine guns, with a half bearer company added, under MAJOR A., will prepare at once to move forward and resist landing forces of enemy, now reported as about to advance on COLCHESTER, one coming overland from MERSEA ISLAND, the other up the RIVER COLNE. MAJOR A.'S command will furnish the left section of an outpost line running east and west to overlook the ROMAN RIVER. The left section will extend from the COLNE to the COLCHESTER—ABBERTON road (inclusive). Further supports will be sent later on, to cencentrate at MIDDLEWICK.

"By order, N.,
"A. A. G."

N.B.—Rendezvous of Blue detached force at FINGRINGHOE LODGE at 10.15 a.m. MAJOR B. to command the force, consisting of one squadron, one battalion, one section field artillery, one section mounted infantry, and two infantry machine guns, with a half bearer company added. No troops to be north of FINGRINGHOE LODGE before 10.45 a.m.

Rendezvous of Red detached force, strength as detailed

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in Special Idea, at east end of BUTTS, MIDDLEWICK, at 9.30 a.m. MAJOR A. to command the force. Troops to move off at 10 a.m. to place outposts, but cavalry not to cross ROMAN RIVER before 10.45 a.m.

Topographical Hints:—The south coast of MERSEA ISLAND is $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles S. of the ROMAN RIVER as the crow flies, but much more by road. The lower stretch of the ROMAN RIVER is crossed by two important bridges, MANWOOD BRIDGE being a little over a mile W. of FINGRINGHOE BRIDGE. FINGRINGHOE LODGE is $\frac{3}{4}$ mile S.S.E. of MANWOOD BRIDGE. WIVENHOE and ROWHEDGE are to be found on opposite banks of the COLNE, about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile above the point of junction of the ROMAN RIVER and the COLNE.

## *Narrative. Invading Force (Blue).*

MAJOR B. received the Special and General Ideas, as well as the further conditions just given, on arriving at FINGRINGHOE LODGE at 10.15 a.m. November 21.

The COMMANDER saw that, according to the map, the country, which was probably held by the enemy's troops on the north of the ROMAN RIVER, was favourable both for the attack and for the defence in some ways and adverse in others. A screen of woods overlooked the river, which formed a natural obstacle for the defenders, saving them the construction of artificial barriers, and especially useful as a protection at night or in foggy weather. At the same time the screening belt of woods was obviously advantageous to the attackers.

The fog, now a mist, was slowly lifting on the upper ground, and he thought at first this was in his favour; but

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it certainly was not so in the hollows and valleys, to which it still clung. It appeared to him that any delay would be fatal, and he hoped that the co-operating force would carry out its part of the arrangements successfully. He therefore decided to push on to his objective, OLD HEATH.

He would advance with the usual precautions, demonstrate on enemy's right, get round his left, and so on to his goal. He thought twice about what he should do with his artillery. One plan was to take advantage of the mist and push the guns straight on over MANWOOD BRIDGE to the ROMAN HILL FARM plateau. The other and safer plan would be to let them take the road on south side of ROMAN RIVER from the place of rendezvous to FINGRINGHOE VILLAGE, so as to be ready to cross at FINGRINGHOE BRIDGE; and as he meant to operate against the enemy's left flank and left centre with the bulk of his force, he determined on this course.

As to his cavalry and mounted infantry, he would use them for information and to seize tactical points respectively. He would demonstrate towards ROMAN HILL FARM and CABBAGE HALL FARM by the ROMAN HILL road with his mounted infantry, and would give his guns a strong cavalry escort, using the rest of his squadron for obtaining information.

As regards the infantry, his scheme would be to demonstrate with a small force to the north-west of DONYLAND WOOD, deceiving the enemy by passing the bulk of his main force to the right flank of his attack, along the north bank of the ROMAN RIVER, and working it round to the south side of DONYLAND HEATH; thence eastwards and northwards towards OLD HEATH. He hoped to concentrate

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near this place, and be supported by the party to be disembarked from the River Colne.

His troops having assembled at 10.30 a.m., Major B. then issued the following "operation orders:"—

**March Orders; by O. Cg. Invading Force (Blue).**

No. 1. Fingringhoe Lodge,
To Os. Cg. Units. *November* 21, 19—, 10.30 *a.m.*

1. The enemy is on the north of the Roman River.

2. I intend to advance upon Old Heath with my command as per margin, driving the enemy away when we meet him.

*One squadron.*
*One battalion.*
*One section F.A.*
*One section M.I.*
*Two machine guns.*

3. Cavalry will reconnoitre and report enemy's position. Two troops to act as escort to artillery.

4. Mounted infantry will be ready to advance quickly to seize tactical point when ordered.

5. Artillery with escort will march direct to Fingringhoe Village and halt.

6. Infantry will advance to cross-roads halfway to Manwood Bridge and halt.

7. Bearer company will follow artillery, and form dressing-station at Fingringhoe Cross-Roads.

8. I shall be with the infantry.

(Sd.) B.,
Major.

Issued personally in writing.

In accordance with the instructions given to the

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COMMANDER, the Blue Force moved off at 10.45 a.m., the infantry having an advanced guard of half of No. 1 Company, and being covered in extreme front by the other half of the company thrown forward in extended order as scouts. The cavalry rushed off ahead and to the flanks undeterred by the fog, and by the time the main column had reached the cross roads (one of which led to FINGRINGHOE VILLAGE on the right) some of the scouts were back with news that the enemy's outpost line was only a few hundred yards north of MANWOOD BRIDGE and the river; that so far the presence of Blue had been unobserved, as the mist was too thick in the river-bed, and they had crept up under its cover.

A halt of ten minutes took place at the cross-roads, and by 11.5 a.m. other reconnoitrers came in who had searched along the near bank of the ROMAN RIVER, and found there was a detached post of Red infantry about halfway between the two bridges, on the north bank. Other scouts reported that the enemy's sentries extended also to the west of MANWOOD BRIDGE, but no post was at or apparently close to the bridge itself.

MAJOR B. was surprised to find MANWOOD BRIDGE open, and feared a trap was being laid for him on this route, but he had already determined not to risk his main body of infantry here until he was perfectly satisfied he was safe in doing so; he would take his chance with the smaller force, and make use of the bridge left open for him. He now issued the following further orders:—

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**Attack Orders; by O. Cg. Invading Force (Blue).**

No. 2. CROSS-ROADS,
To Os. Cg. Units. *November* 21, 19—, 11.10 *a.m.*

1. Enemy reported occupying ground just north of river.

2. I intend to drive him off and push through to OLD HEATH.

3. The mounted infantry will demonstrate up ROMAN HILL road and seize ROMAN HILL FARM. Infantry will support in false attack.

4. Two companies infantry to demonstrate at N.W. corner of DONYLAND WOOD, and support mounted infantry as above.

5. Main body of infantry to cross MANWOOD BRIDGE and skirt south and east borders of DONYLAND WOOD and HEATH. One company as advanced guard, and afterwards as flank guard in woods.

6. After reconnoitring, half-squadron will join infantry main body.

7. Guns with cavalry escort will wait orders to cross river, but will then advance on IPSWICH ARMS P. H.

8. I shall be with main body of infantry.

(Sd.) B.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing, and copies by cyclists to cavalry and artillery.

It was also verbally explained that the main body must be allowed to get well ahead, before the mounted infantry moved up the ROMAN HILL road, so that the feigned attack should not be premature.

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At 11.15 a.m. the advance from the cross roads took place. The main body, preceded by the scouting half of No. 1 Company, followed up by the other half company in skirmishing order, moved forward in absolute silence till it neared the bridge, when the main body came to a halt. The bridge was crossed by the leading scouts without any notice being taken by the enemy. No post at all was found at the bridge, but a double sentry post of the Red outpost line was found about 200 yards east of MANWOOD BRIDGE, and 100 yards north of the river-bank. This was rushed by the Blue scouts in the mist which prevailed, without a shot being fired on either side.

It being evident that the passage of the bridge was absolutely safe, the main body of infantry now crossed over. The advanced guard entered the south-western lower corner of DONYLAND WOOD, and proceeded to work along inside the wood in an easterly direction, acting as a flank guard to the main body. The latter left Nos. 2 and 3 Companies behind at a re-entrant in the outer western perimeter of the wood, and continued to advance, skirting the southern border on its outside. It had not progressed more than a couple of hundred yards when there occurred one of those unfortunate mischances which will and do happen in actual warfare, and which no COMMANDER, however great a military genius he may be, has the power to prevent.

One of the men of the Blue Force placed his foot in a rabbit-hole when floundering on through the mist, and accidentally discharged his rifle ; this shot reverberated through the valley, and not only gave the alarm to the enemy's outposts on the adjacent heights, but also had the

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effect of increasing the nervous tension of the man's own comrades. A reckless volley of random shots resulted, to be immediately followed by a perfect Babel of orders and counter orders, accompanied by the shrill piping of innumerable whistles.

It was at 11.25 a.m. that this disclosure of the presence of the Blue Force was made, and MAJOR B. at once rushed forward his section of mounted infantry, which had just crossed MANWOOD BRIDGE, towards ROMAN HILL FARM. They were supported by the two companies of infantry, Nos. 2 and 3, in shelter at the south-western margin of the wood. These troops made a noisy demonstration against the north-west corner of DONYLAND WOOD and against ROMAN HILL FARM, and the two machine guns were also pushed up to increase the clatter. The company of advanced scouts, No. 1, was stalking through the wood towards WHITE BARN, in a north-easterly direction, and acting as a flank guard to the main body of Blue infantry; the latter were pushing before them the Red piquets and sentries which they came across in their route under the lee of the sheltering woods, as the Red outposts gradually withdrew up the heights.

Nothing as yet had been heard of the co-operating force having landed at WIVENHOE, nor were there any sounds of action in an easterly direction. Distant firing on the extreme west was distinctly heard, but on the COLNE RIVER side, WIVENHOE and ROWHEDGE way, perfect stillness prevailed.

At 11.40 a.m. a general advance in a north-easterly direction, through DONYLAND WOOD and round the south border of DONYLAND HEATH, was in progress on the part

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of the Blue Force, and MAJOR B. had sent orders to his artillery at FINGRINGHOE VILLAGE to cross the river and advance to DONYLAND HEATH.

The Blue mounted infantry had now worked their way round to WHITE BARN, which they had seized. The two companies of Blue infantry supporting the mounted infantry, finding the pressure relieved, had also gone on to WHITE BARN. The Red troops seemed to have fallen back to a more retired position near DONYLAND LODGE.

### *Narrative. Defending Force (Red).*

MAJOR A. received the General and Special Ideas[1] at 9.30 a.m., November 21, 19—, at the east end of the BUTTS, MIDDLEWICK. He at once studied his map and considered the situation, his Staff Officer looking after the allotted force, which arrived at 9.45 a.m.

MAJOR A. knew the ground well. He noted that he was to be prepared to resist two landing parties, which were intended to co-operate to dislodge him, and to push by him to whatever point might be their objective. He saw that he had to furnish one section of an outpost line to overlook the ROMAN RIVER. This line must have its left flank on the COLNE to watch and guard the river passages, and force the enemy moving by water to land before he gained a passage which would allow him to disembark in rear of the outpost line. This flank should therefore be securely protected, if possible; both artillery and machine guns being held in readiness to act on the left of the line when required.

[1] For Special Idea of Red Force, see p. 226.

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The landing force coming from MERSEA would probably have some part of COLCHESTER for its objective, and might advance by FINGRINGHOE BRIDGE on OLD HEATH, or by MANWOOD BRIDGE towards the west side of MIDDLEWICK. In the former case DONYLAND LODGE and OLD HEATH would be the best supporting points to resist him, in the latter case ROMAN HILL FARM and CABBAGE HALL FARM. As, however, the enemy had a co-operating force to look to on the east side, it seemed natural to suppose that he would rather combine for an attack on OLD HEATH than on any point to the west.

MAJOR A., however, being an officer of experience, knew only too well the danger of a too hasty generalization from partial premises, and determined not to assume one form of attack as more probable than another. He recognized the fact at once, that his advanced outpost line would not be safe against an attack by a hostile body in force, but would have to fall back and concentrate in the best defensive position, thus delaying and giving notice of the approach of the enemy. He looked carefully at the ground overlooking the ROMAN RIVER and at the best positions for resistance against various forms of attack, and examined the strength of his force so as to make the best distribution of it, in order to conform with the topographical peculiarities of the terrain of attack. Roughly speaking, it was as follows: guns well back and centrally placed, reserves similarly situated, supports on the right and left near the positions of proposed resistance, viz. at BIRCH BROOK BRIDGE south of DONYLAND LODGE, and at ROMAN HILL FARM, with a third support centrally placed at WHITE BARN. It would appear from the Special Idea

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that the outposts had to hold their ground until reinforced, in which case they must be able to concentrate quickly. His battalion, he thought, would be able to watch and guard about one and a half miles of country. He would allot four companies as outpost companies, to be divided off into three supports furnishing five piquets. The other half battalion would form the reserve in two parts.

### Numerical Distribution of Outpost Companies.

Supports to furnish piquets. Piquets all half a company strong, except Nos. 4 and 5 piquets a section strong each.

| | Companies. |
|---|---|
| *Left Support* (No. 1 piquet) ... ... | No. 1. |
| *Centre Support* (Nos. 2, 3 piquets) ... | Nos. 2, 3. |
| *Right Support* (Nos. 4, 5 piquets) ... | No. 4. |

N.B.—The *Left Reserve* would be formed of Nos. 5, 6 Companies, and the *Right Reserve* of Nos. 7, 8 Companies.

### Topographical Distribution of Left Section of Outpost Line, under Major A.

*Left Support.*—Just south of bridge over Birch Brook, a quarter of a mile south of Donyland Lodge.

*No.* 1 *Piquet.*—Church Hill, Rowhedge, with detached post at ford over river, to the east. Three double sentry posts, two on left, near 50-feet contour line, the third one on right near disused semaphore.

*Centre Support.*—North-west corner of Donyland Heath, near White Barn.

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*No.* 2 *Piquet.*—About 250 yards from south-east corner of DONYLAND HEATH, on the west side of the road to FINGRINGHOE. Three double-sentry posts, the centre and right posts being west of the road, on or about the 50-feet contour, the left post being about halfway between the road and the semaphore. This piquet supplies an examining post on main road opposite EAST DONYLAND HALL.

*No.* 3 *Piquet.*—About 200 yards south of the south-west corner of DONYLAND HEATH, where one road joins another. Two double-sentry posts on 50-feet contour line overlooking the ROMAN RIVER. Also a detached post to the north bank of the river.

*Right Support.*—ROMAN HILL FARM.

*No.* 4 *Piquet.*—South border of DONYLAND WOOD, about 50 yards inside, with two double-sentry posts on south margin of wood, about 100 yards from north bank of river.

*No.* 5 *Piquet.*—A hundred yards west of north-west upper corner of DONYLAND WOOD, close to the COLCHESTER—MANWOOD BRIDGE ROAD, at 50-feet level. One double-sentry post, about 150 yards north-east of the bridge, and 100 yards from the river-bank; another similar post on 50-feet contour, 200 yards west of the road, the exact position being 350 yards N.N.W. of MANWOOD BRIDGE. This piquet was also to furnish a detached post for MANWOOD BRIDGE.

*Left Reserve.*—At DONYLAND CROSS-ROADS.

*Right Reserve.*—One hundred and fifty yards south-west of A BUTT, MIDDLEWICK.

N.B.—The left double-sentry post of the other section of the outposts, not under MAJOR A.'s command, would be

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about a quarter of a mile west of the right double-sentry of the left section of the line.

This disposition of piquets and sentries had necessarily to be left to the officers in charge of outpost companies. The outpost COMMANDER was particular, however, in naming himself the position of the supports, especially those on the left and right flanks, for he knew his piquets and sentries would be driven in, and he would then have to concentrate at those positions where he could secure the best field of fire, and be in the best place for offering resistance until his outposts were reinforced.

At 9.50 a.m. MAJOR A. issued the following "operation orders:"—

**Outpost Orders; by O. Cg. Defending Force (Red).**

No. 1. MIDDLEWICK,
To Os. Cg. Units. *November* 21, 19—, 9.50 *a.m.*

1. The enemy is reported to be disembarked and coming on overland from MERSEA, and also up the COLNE.

2. We are to be supported later by our other troops, which will concentrate at MIDDLEWICK on arrival.

3. I intend to stop the enemy's advance, occupying the ground overlooking the ROMAN RIVER, with my command as per margin, disposed as the left section of an outpost line.

*One squadron.*
*One battalion.*
*One section F.A.*
*Two machine guns.*

4. The squadron acting as outpost mounted troops will reconnoitre on the COLCHESTER—FINGRINGHOE ROAD to the south, in the direction of the RIVER COLNE, and report. The cavalry must not cross the ROMAN RIVER before 10.45 a.m.

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5. The right half battalion, Nos. 1 to 4 Companies, of the infantry, will form outpost companies to furnish three supports, one near DONYLAND LODGE, one at WHITE BARN, and another at ROMAN HILL FARM. The necessary piquets will be furnished by the supports. The remaining four companies will furnish two reserves, one near the BUTTS, th e other near DONYLAND LODGE CROSS-ROADS, of two companies each.

6. Machine guns will be emplaced at ROWHEDGE, under protection of the nearest piquet.

7. The artillery will remain near the BUTTS, in which direction the outposts will fall back to take up the line of resistance, if driven in by the enemy.

8. No fires will be lighted by the outpost companies.

9. An examining-post will be placed by No. 2 piquet on the FINGRINGHOE road.

10. A dressing-station will be established by the bearer company at WHITEHALL, on the COLCHESTER road.

11. I shall be with the left reserve near DONYLAND LODGE.

(Sd.) A.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

At 10 a.m. the Red Force left the rendezvous to carry out these orders.

The cavalry, except one troop left for communication purposes, moved off with the outpost companies, and not being permitted to cross the river until 10.45 a.m., drew up on the south side of DONYLAND HEATH to await the hour named.

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Although at starting from the rendezvous there was not much fog to speak of, it soon began to get rather misty. The infantry, however, found their places very well, as their leaders were acquainted with the country about COLCHESTER. All were therefore posted by 10.30 a.m., approximately, as detailed in the foregoing topographical distribution, the air being still clear enough for the sentries in position to see their neighbouring posts, and to watch the approaches.

At 10.40 a.m. the Red cavalry near DONYLAND HEATH began to move forward to cross to the south bank of the ROMAN RIVER at the appointed time, but the fog was now again closing in, and they had to proceed very cautiously and slowly. By 10.45 a.m., while they were groping about to find the bridge, it had got so thick in the river-bed and adjoining valleys that they could barely see their horses' ears. The scouts, who had spread out as they advanced, soon lost all connection with each other, and were hopelessly adrift. It is needless to say they could see nothing of the enemy.

About 11 a.m., in the upper ground, it got a little clearer, and supports and reserves of the Red Force near DONYLAND CROSS-ROADS, on the 75-feet contour, observed some changes in the mist, but in the hollow of the BIRCH BROOK all was still enshrouded in an impenetrable pall. There was a curious silence everywhere, which at length became monotonous. This was shortly destined to be broken.

It was just 11.25 a.m. when a sharp sudden report was heard from the south side of the woods. A single shot echoing again and again from the heights which crowned the ROMAN RIVER, quickly followed by a straggling volley

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of independent shots. Then a chorus of incoherent voices, issuing orders as it seemed, and the piping of whistles ensued, more shots, now in volleys, following.

The central support was at once put in motion, and went rushing south through the wood to reinforce its piquets, which were being hustled back on to the heights. MANWOOD BRIDGE had been crossed by the enemy unopposed, no detached post being there, as had been ordered, to give warning and resist the crossing, and No. 5 piquet being taken by surprise retired reluctantly towards the right support near ROMAN HILL FARM.

At 11.35 a.m. a cyclist messenger reached MAJOR A. on the hill north of BIRCH BROOK, below DONYLAND LODGE, and informed him that his left centre was being pierced by the enemy in force. Another cyclist came in from ROMAN HILL FARM to say that a noisy demonstration was in progress against the north-west upper corner of DONYLAND WOOD, but that the right support was entrenched, and guarding the COLCHESTER—MANWOOD BRIDGE road near ROMAN HILL FARM.

MAJOR A. had not had a single cavalry report, so far, and knew nothing as to where the co-operating hostile force might be. He at once scribbled out a note for each commander, which he sent by mounted orderlies, who had a better chance now of finding the way, as the mist was clearing off. MAJOR A. intended to concentrate on a position facing the enemy near DONYLAND LODGE and its cross-roads. He therefore ordered up both reserves and artillery; sent to the right support to hold on and guard the road to COLCHESTER on that flank; and ordered a general concentration to be made at the position selected



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for resistance. No. 1 piquet, which had not fallen back, was ordered to remain, to guard and watch the road near ROWHEDGE leading to the ford, as well as the landing approaches, and directed not to retire unless it was threatened to be cut off. The left support was pushed forward to back up this piquet, and also to guard the main-road approach on this flank.

The cavalry were still absent.

## *General Narrative.*

The COMMANDER of the Blue Force was at WHITE BARN when he was handed a despatch by a Staff Officer. It purported to come from the FLAGSHIP at mouth of the COLNE, and to have been sent overland. It was to the following effect—

"HEAD QUARTERS, FLAGSHIP,
"To O. Cg. Detached Force (Blue), MOUTH of the COLNE,
ROMAN RIVER. *November* 21, 19—, 10 *a.m.*

"The flotilla was delayed starting for WIVENHOE till 6.30 a.m. We have just received news that it is forced to return, the fog being too thick on the river. Some of the barges have run ashore and are wrecked. You must therefore act without the help promised you.

"By order, W.,
"CHIEF OF STAFF."

MAJOR B. saw that there was now no co-operating force to join him, and that he must do the best he could without it.

The Blue troops were in occupation of WHITE BARN,

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others streaming through the woods, and lining the hedges north of the cross-road running west from the IPSWICH ARMS P. H. The Blue artillery was waiting under cover to take position in a field about 200 yards north-west of the IPSWICH ARMS, behind a slight rise in the ground. Blue cavalry were coming up through the woods, and a few also of the mud-splashed Red cavalry troopers were slowly feeling their way up the hill from FINGRINGHOE VILLAGE.

The fight on both sides was progressing when the "Cease fire" was sounded, and all the troop leaders, including the befogged cavalry commander on the Red side who trotted up from the ROMAN RIVER, repaired to the centre of MIDDLEWICK to attend the "Summing up;" the rain having now ceased, and the sun again breaking through the clouds.

## *Summing up.*

The officers having all assembled, the UMPIRE-IN-CHIEF asked the Blue side COMMANDER if he had any remarks to make.

MAJOR B. stated that his co-operating force had failed him, and fate seemed against him, the weather coming on so thick having upset all his plans. A sudden accident had prematurely disclosed his advance, but he did not so much mind that, as he did not quite expect to get past more of the sentries without firing a shot; still it had a bad effect in more ways than one. He thought his plan of attack correct, and if he had been supported as he had expected from ROWHEDGE side, he believed he would have

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carried the position at DONYLAND LODGE and gained his objective near OLD HEATH.

MAJOR A. said he was disappointed in the way his cavalry had acted. He meant them to reconnoitre all the roads to the south, and if he was misunderstood, his orders were written under pressure of time; but he always trusted to his subordinate officers using their judgment to grasp the substance of an order from their general experience in such matters, looking at the scheme as a whole from a broad point of view.

He was surprised at MANWOOD BRIDGE being left open, and this was a point he thought the officer in charge of the right support should have arranged.

He believed, as the left of the position had not been assailed by a party landing near WIVENHOE, he would have easily won the day by beating off MAJOR B. before he could be reinforced overland.

CAPTAIN D., the cavalry leader, was next interrogated. He said that as he read his orders they were plain enough. He was told distinctly to reconnoitre on the COLCHESTER —FINGRINGHOE road to the south and to the RIVER COLNE, and by this he inferred that he would be right, after carefully searching the localities and buildings in immediate vicinity of the ROMAN RIVER, in going right along towards his objective, *i.e.* the enemy, and not stopping until he had found him, when, of course, he would quickly report. Unfortunately he could not find the enemy, the fog being so thick in places that some of his men had fired at their comrades by mistake in the mist. Wherever he went he seemed to get into muddy creeks, or what appeared to be locally known as "saltings." He thought he saw in the

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dim distance some trailing smoke and what looked like barges stuck in the mud, in a far-away creek a long way south on the right bank of the COLNE. He could get no nearer owing to intervening marshes, but he thought afterwards these might be the floating attackers. He then heard distant firing to the north, and at once came back as fast as he could. So long as he had carried out his orders to the letter, as far as he was able, he did not think he was to blame.

CAPTAIN O., the officer in charge of the right support, was next called upon to give the reason for leaving MANWOOD BRIDGE undefended, thereby enabling the enemy to pass patrols, and indeed the bulk of his main body, along the north bank of the ROMAN RIVER under cover of the sheltering woods. He replied that the support he was looking after was entrenching at a distance from the piquets and sentries, and that he had left this matter to the subaltern in charge of No. 5 piquet.

The subaltern, however, had left it to a senior sergeant, lately arrived from a long period of foreign service in a distant naval base, where no proper tactical exercises were ever performed. The subaltern had also been busy in the mist, in finding out where the extreme left sentry of the right section of the general outpost line was posted.

The CHIEF UMPIRE, in summing up, was of opinion that the fight had been most interesting in spite of the adverse state of the weather. As for the Blue Force, their COMMANDER had to face odds; not only did he suffer from the adverse forces of fate, but the forces of nature were against him; he nevertheless took advantage of what seemed to him favourable opportunities, and fought a plucky action

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on what appeared a well-conceived plan. That he would have been ultimately successful, even if his co-operating force had turned up near ROWHEDGE, was, however, extremely doubtful, and the Chief Umpire was clearly of opinion that acting singly, he could not have forced the Red troops from the strong position to which they had retired near DONYLAND LODGE.

As for Red, his dispositions were judiciously arranged, but he had not been helped as he should have been by some of his subordinate commanders. What was most striking was the failure to grasp the situation by the cavalry leader, who, by not taking the responsibility of thinking for himself, had nearly marred the whole defence scheme by the lack of information. The omission to bar MANWOOD BRIDGE was also a serious matter; such an oversight on active service in the field might have resulted in a disaster to the troops engaged.

*Comments.*

The unexpected variations which may be introduced into a tactical operation by the nature of the prevailing weather is here brought into prominent notice, and its effect on both the attack and defence is exemplified. The absence of information owing to lack of scouting in the fog was most prejudicial to the defending COMMANDER, and caused him to be so hurried in his final dispositions, that it was fortunate his conclusions, based on late information brought by cyclists, proved to be as sound as they were, and enabled him to take up his positions to the best advantage, after and not before he had correctly diagnosed the enemy's intentions.

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Opposite page 246.

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The advantage to the attacker of the initiative, and concealment of his plans until the last moment by a protecting screen of wood, and by irregularities in the ground, is clearly shown up, and it ought to be noted that in order to take full advantage of such conditions, every use should be made of them by the rapidity of movement of the attacking troops, which would tend to puzzle the defenders in deciding what the attackers are about, and would give the former little time to counter the moves of their opponents by quickly moving up reserves in direction of the threatened points.

The great importance of leaving no loopholes for the enemy, or neglecting to take every known precaution to improve a position or safeguard the defence, is forcibly brought to notice by the omission to guard the crossing at MANWOOD BRIDGE.

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# N.

## TACTICAL OPERATION AT THE CURRAGH.

(*See Maps* 7, 8.)

### Attack and Defence of Position.

*September* 25, 19—.

This scheme was set at a field officers' examination at the Curragh on September 25, 1901. The narrative is now based on notes furnished to the Author by the officers engaged. The whole has been, however, carefully revised, and with their sanction some obvious mistakes have been corrected, so as to enable the record to be a typical representation of a tactical operation of this character. The movements and pace of the infantry engaged have also been brought in accord with what is now laid down in Infantry Training and in Combined Training, 1902. The scheme does not, therefore, pretend to be more than a very imperfect report of the actual movements, but as a tactical study it may have some value.

Permission has been accorded to the Author to make use of the General and Special Ideas of the exercise, by the General Officer Commanding at the Curragh.

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*General Idea.*

The river Liffey is the boundary between eastern and western countries. The right bank of the river, from OLD CONNELL HOUSE to ATHGARVAN BRIDGE (inclusive) is held by Eastern troops; a Western Force occupies KILDARE.

*Special Idea. Eastern Force (Blue).*

On the morning of September 25, an Eastern Force arrives at CONNELL FORD from NAAS, when the O. Cg. receives orders to advance at once and endeavour to seize KILDARE.

Strength of Eastern Force at CONNELL FORD.
- Two squadrons of cavalry.
- One battery of field artillery.
- One and a half battalions of infantry.
- Half bearer company.

Rendezvous: WALSHESTOWN CROSS-ROADS, 9.55 a.m.

*Special Idea. Western Force (Red).*

On the morning of September 25, the O. Cg. Western Force is ordered from Headquarters to take up a position covering KILDARE.

Strength of Western Force at KILDARE.
- One battalion of infantry.
- One squadron of cavalry.
- One battery of field artillery.
- One field company of engineers.
- Half bearer company.

Rendezvous: KILDARE CROSS-ROADS, 9.55 a.m.

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N.B.—Operations to commence at 10.30 a.m., before which hour no troops will leave the rendezvous, except cavalry scouts, who may move off at 10.15 a.m. CAMP can only be crossed by BROWNSTONE and WINDY GAP roads. G. S. AND W. RAILWAY to be treated as a river, and only to be passed at bridges and arches actually existing. MAJOR N. to command Blue Force. MAJOR C. to command Red Force.

Topographical Hints :—From the CURRAGH encampment as a centre, NAAS is 8 miles N.E. as the crow flies; KILDARE is $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles W.; ATHGARVAN BRIDGE is $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles E.; OLD CONNELL HOUSE is $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles N.E. by N.; CONNELL FORD is $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles N.E.; BROWNSTONE ROAD lies between E. and F. LINES; WINDY GAP road is between H. and I. lines.

## *Narrative. Eastern or Blue Force.*

The General Idea and the Special Idea for Blue Force were handed to MAJOR N. at WALSHESTOWN CROSS-ROADS at 9.55 a.m.

MAJOR N., having consulted his maps, considered the possibilities of the situation. If he advanced to threaten KILDARE, his opponent would probably move out to a good position on the East of the town to cover it. Could the KNOCK-AENACH RIDGE and WALSH'S RATH both be occupied, the best possible position would be taken up to afford protection to Kildare, but the enemy was probably not strong enough for this, and would be obliged to be satisfied with holding one of these hills. It must be the business of the Blue cavalry to examine and report as

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quickly as possible, where the enemy was to be found, but in the mean time MAJOR N. determined to move forward *viâ* CAMP INN HILL, so that he could direct his attack against either position when his information was obtained.

He accordingly issued the following "operation orders:"—

**Cavalry Orders; by O. Cg. Eastern Force (Blue).**

No. 1. WALSHESTOWN CROSS-ROADS,
To O. Cg. Cavalry. *September* 25, 19—, 10.10 *a.m.*

1. The enemy holds KILDARE.

2. The O. Cg. cavalry will send patrols from his left squadron to the front at 10.15 a.m. to reconnoitre along the line MONUMENT HILL—FLAT RATH, and report at once on position and strength of enemy.

(Sd.) N.,
MAJOR.

Personally in writing.

These patrols went out at the hour named. Subsequently the following orders were issued:—

**Attack Orders; by O. Cg. Eastern Force (Blue).**

No. 2. WALSHESTOWN CROSS-ROADS,
To Os. Cg. Units. *September* 25, 19—, 10.20 *a.m.*

1. The enemy holds KILDARE.

2. I intend to seize the town, with the force under my command as per margin.

*Two squadrons.*
*One battery.*
*One and a half battalions.*
*Half bearer co.*

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3. The O. Cg. cavalry will send his right squadron (less one troop) to seize CAMP INN HILL, and hold it by dismounted action till infantry arrive. This squadron will then protect my right flank. The left squadron (less patrols now out) will advance to occupy defiles across CURRAGH CAMP, and to operate on my left flank.

4. The battery will move to a position west of CEMETERY HILL (with a cavalry troop as escort) to command CAMP INN HILL and neighbourhood.

5. The O. Cg. 1st Battalion infantry will send four companies with maxim gun *viâ* CEMETERY to hold CAMP INN HILL. This force will relieve dismounted cavalry on arrival. Remaining half battalion will advance to the CEMETERY as a general reserve at my disposal.

6. The O. Cg. four companies 2nd Battalion infantry will move them *viâ* HEAD QUARTER BLOCK through the CURRAGH CAMP towards GIBBET RATH.

7. A dressing-station will be formed at WALSHESTOWN CROSS-ROADS.

8. Reports will find me with the artillery. The troops will move forward at 10.30 a.m.

(Sd.) N.,
MAJOR.

Dictated to Os. Cg. Units or Adjutants.

Verbal explanations were also given to the effect that if the enemy were found to be at GIBBET RATH or on any part of KNOCK-AENACH RIDGE, a frontal or holding attack must be made upon him from the west side of the CURRAGH CAMP by the companies of the 2nd Battalion, and a flank attack from CAMP INN HILL *viâ* HERBERT

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LODGE by the 1st Battalion, to be pushed home. The companies for the several duties were detailed as follows: for CAMP INN HILL, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 Companies, and for general reserve Nos. 5, 6, 7, 8 Companies of 1st Battalion. For GIBBET RATH, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 Companies of 2nd Battalion.

At 10.30 a.m. the Blue troops advanced as directed, and the artillery took post on CEMETERY HILL.

By 10.45 a.m. CAMP INN HILL was in the hands of the Blue cavalry, and the news transmitted by signal to MAJOR N. at CEMETERY HILL.

MAJOR N. accordingly issued the following order:—

**Artillery Orders; by O. Cg. Eastern Force (Blue).**

No. 3. CEMETERY HILL,
To O. Cg. Artillery. *September* 25, 19—, 10.45 *a.m.*

Take on your battery at once to CAMP INN HILL, but do not show your guns till I come up.

(Sd.) N.,
MAJOR.

Personally in writing.

At 10.55 a.m. MAJOR N. ordered the four companies of infantry reserve to follow to CAMP INN HILL the companies already sent to relieve the cavalry. This was a verbal order to the battalion commander.

MAJOR N. now moved on himself to CAMP INN HILL, and arrived at 11.10 a.m. Here he found the hill under fire of hostile artillery from direction of KNOCK-AENACH. The officer commanding artillery of the Blue Force had not replied, and had kept his guns as directed under cover,

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having secured a sheltered position. On MAJOR N.'s order the battery unlimbered and opened fire on KNOCK-AENACH. The target was not very good, but the range was quickly obtained. The Blue dismounted cavalry remained under cover.

At 11.15 a.m. the COMMANDER received a message which followed him to CAMP INN HILL from the O. Cg. left squadron, despatched at 10.55 a.m., reporting the left flank clear of enemy, but troops on western slopes of KNOCK-AENACH, and artillery also on the hill. The following order was sent to the left squadron :—

**Cavalry Orders; by O. Cg. Eastern Force (Blue).**

CAMP INN HILL,

To O. Cg. Left Squadron. *September* 25, 19—, 11.20 *a.m.*

Your report of 10.55 a.m. received. As soon as infantry advance to attack KNOCK-AENACH from CAMP INN HILL, push forward squadron on south side of CURRAGH CAMP and threaten enemy's rear.

(Sd.) N.,
MAJOR.

By messenger in writing.

By 11.20 a.m. Blue infantry were holding CAMP INN HILL, and the COMMANDER ordered the right squadron forward to protect the right flank in the attack. The infantry (one battalion in all) were to advance to the attack of KNOCK-AENACH *viâ* HERBERT LODGE. These orders were given verbally.

As the troops were moving forward (it being now about

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11.30 a.m.), the fire of the Red artillery from KNOCK-AENACH, which had been conducted in a very desultory fashion, ceased altogether, and from reports shortly received from the leading cavalry scouts the guns appeared to have been removed. They soon re-opened fire from the direction of WALSH'S RATH.

The Blue infantry, advancing in long lines of skirmishers, now partially masked the fire of their guns from CAMP INN HILL, and MAJOR N. ordered one section of two guns to take up a fresh covered position near the STAND HOUSE, about a mile from WALSH'S RATH. The order was given verbally, and the guns went off at a trot accompanied by part of the cavalry escort to take up their new position. MAJOR N. remained on CAMP INN HILL with the rest of the battery. His reason for sending only two guns on was that he thought it would be difficult to get a covered position for a whole battery at the STAND HOUSE, and that it might be necessary to disperse the guns.

Reports now came from the cavalry on extreme left to effect that they had received their orders, and were working round the right rear of the KNOCK-AENACH position. Also from the infantry approaching the enemy *vid* GIBBET RATH, that they had not yet localized the exact position of the Red troops at KNOCK-AENACH, and that the guns of the latter seemed to have been withdrawn. These companies, Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the 2nd Battalion, as they neared KNOCK-AENACH were disposed in very open formations, scouts well in advance, and two lines of skirmishers following with considerable distances between lines. Two companies were held back in reserve, and moved in line of columns of sections.

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At 11.50 a.m. the remaining guns of the Blue battery were sent from CAMP INN HILL after the advanced section, an urgent message having been received to say that the Red guns had opened on the Blue guns from WALSH'S RATH, and were too much for the section working alone.

Information now received by MAJOR N. from his cavalry on the right flank, showed that the enemy had deceived him, and were now holding WALSH'S RATH strongly, having placed themselves in previously prepared trenches at that spot. Simultaneous intelligence from his left flank confirmed this, as it stated that the enemy had abandoned KNOCK-AENACH.

MAJOR N. issued orders at once to both infantry bodies to advance on WALSH'S RATH, and he himself galloped off to HERBERT LODGE to direct the attack in person.

## *Narrative. Western Force (Red).*

The General Idea and the Special Idea [1] for Western Force were handed to MAJOR C. at the KILDARE CROSS-ROADS at 9.55 a.m.

MAJOR C., on considering the problem submitted to him, decided that an entrenched position at either KNOCK-AENACH or WALSH'S RATH would meet the required conditions. He thought it would be advisable to have as much time as possible for entrenching, and that it would be a good thing to deceive the enemy into the belief that RED was about to hold one of these positions, and even to lead the Southern troops on to attack it, while the other

[1] For Special Idea for Western Force, see page 249.

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position was in effect the intended defensive post for the Western Force.

He accordingly issued the following "operation orders:"—

**Defence Orders; by O. Cg. Western Force (Red).**

No. 1. KILDARE CROSS-ROADS,
To Os. Cg. Units. *September* 25, 19—, 10.10 *a.m.*

1. The enemy threatens KILDARE from the east.

2. I intend to take position at WALSH'S RATH, where I shall entrench, with my command as per margin, to cover KILDARE.

*One squadron.*
*One battalion.*
*One battery F.A.*
*One field co. R.E.*
*Half bearer co.*

3. I propose to lead on enemy to attack KNOCK-AENACH RIDGE in the first place by feigning to hold that position.

4. Cavalry will send three patrols to front and flanks to report on enemy's movements. The flank patrols will extend to RATHBRIDE CROSS-ROADS on the north and CUTBUSH CROSS-ROADS on the south. An escort of one troop will be sent to the artillery.

5. When the troops march off, the field company of engineers, with four companies of infantry, will proceed at once to WALSH'S RATH, where an entrenched position will be prepared.

6. Artillery will proceed same time to take up temporary position at KNOCK-AENACH, preparatory to moving to WALSH'S RATH.



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7. The remaining four companies of infantry will proceed also to KNOCK-AENACH, and take post temporarily to deceive enemy.

8. A dressing-station will be formed near the KILDARE road, on the east side of the town.

9. I shall be with the artillery. Cavalry patrols will start at 10.15 a.m. ; remainder of force at 10.30 a.m.

(Sd.) C.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

At 10.15 a.m. the three cavalry patrols started off to the front and flanks as directed, and at 10.30 a.m. the rest of the force was put in motion.

On arriving near the hill of KNOCK-AENACH, the field company and the half battalion of infantry, consisting of Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4 Companies, proceeded straight to WALSH'S RATH across the CURRAGH ; the remainder of the battalion, Nos. 5, 6, 7, and 8 Companies, together with the guns, leaving the main road and making for a sheltered place on the western slopes of KNOCK-AENACH, the COMMANDER himself advancing to the front to select a position on the RIDGE facing east suitable for his purpose.

Meantime reports came in from the cavalry patrols in front and on the right flank. The enemy appeared to be moving to CEMETERY HILL, and had a force of cavalry about a squadron strong on each side of the CAMP, pushing everything before them, which made observation very difficult.

At 10.50 a.m. MAJOR C. received news that the Blue cavalry had occupied CAMP INN HILL. He now put his

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troops, artillery and infantry, in his selected position at KNOCK-AENACH, which was chosen rather with a view of making a show of strength than with any other object, although, if necessary, it could be made defensible. The guns were posted centrally, and two companies, Nos. 5 and 6, extended in the first line, forming their own supports. Two companies were held back in reserve.

At 11 a.m. MAJOR C. perceived with his glasses what he thought to be artillery on CAMP INN HILL. A few minutes later he directed the artillery officer of the Red Force to fire upon this HILL. The range being already approximately known by the map as 2700 yards, a few trial shots sufficed to correct the elevation. Some commotion was observed through the glasses, but no fire was returned.

At 10 minutes past 11 a.m. more troops were seen coming on to CAMP INN HILL, and a few minutes later a battery opened fire on the Red artillery at KNOCK-AENACH. At the same time the right cavalry patrol sent word that it was being pushed right back by a strong force of Blue cavalry, which was too much for it. The COMMANDER of the Western Force sent out at once a reinforcement of a troop which had remained with him, in order to prevent the Red position from being too closely examined.

The centre cavalry patrol now sent in word that Blue guns had moved from CEMETERY HILL to CAMP INN HILL, and also that Blue infantry was following. Further, that a separate force of Blue infantry was proceeding westward through the CURRAGH CAMP. This last force was about half a battalion strong.

MAJOR C. directed the Red artillery to reply to the Blue battery for a few rounds only, to preserve the deception of

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the position, and he then ordered the guns to be drawn back by hand behind the crest of the hill, as it would not do to have any loss or damage occur to the battery which might prevent it moving to WALSH'S RATH. An occasional round was fired by a gun specially run up and withdrawn again after firing. The infantry were directed to let themselves be seen, as if altering or extending their position.

At 11.25 a.m. MAJOR C. was notified from WALSH'S RATH that the position at that place was ready for occupation, and he would have wished to take the troops there at once. He was, however, apprehensive of the movements reported by his right cavalry patrol, which seemed to indicate that a strong body of the enemy was working round his right flank and rear. He did not like the possibility of being cut off from Kildare if he moved all his troops to WALSH'S RATH, and determined to hold on where he was for a little while, until the troop he had sent out to reinforce the right patrol should report further on this head.

At 11.30 a.m. a message from the centre patrol showed that a force about a battalion strong of Blue infantry was advancing from CAMP INN HILL towards KNOCK-AENACH, and that the remaining BLUE infantry was closely approaching GIBBET RATH.

The cavalry troop on the right now sent in word that the enemy had nothing but a squadron of cavalry on the south side of KNOCK-AENACH.

MAJOR C. at once decided to move to WALSH'S RATH, and the Red guns, limbering up, went off at a trot in that direction with their escort. The Red infantry followed, extending in lines of skirmishers across the CURRAGH as they advanced, and covering their right flank with

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many scouts. The infantry left KNOCH-AENACH at 11.35 a.m.

By 11.40 a.m. the Red battery had reached WALSH'S RATH, where good positions were prepared for the guns. The artillery Commander was informed on arrival that some Blue guns had come to the STAND HOUSE, which was a little more than a mile away. He got the range, and fired a few rounds at the hostile artillery. The latter replied feebly, and appeared to have but one or two guns present.

By 11.50 a.m. the Red infantry had arrived at WALSH'S RATH, where the whole battalion was now assembled. The Commander established four companies in and about the entrenchments which the field company of engineers had prepared for their reception. These companies furnished their own supports. The other four companies were held in local and general reserve.

On inspecting their work, MAJOR C. found that the field company had done very well in the short time (about three-quarters of an hour) at their disposal for strengthening the position. They carried 500 empty sand-bags with their equipment. A number of these were filled with earth on arrival, and piled up, with the addition of loose stones, of which there was a plentiful supply on the RATH, so as to form small irregular mounds in front of the spots selected for two of the guns. These were at the extreme ends of the line of entrenchments facing east, but slightly lower than the top of the hill, so as to deceive as to elevation. Two other guns were to be hidden in slight depressions scooped out of the surface of the hill summit, with furze bushes to hide their outline. The guns were thus emplaced

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at varying intervals, and far enough apart to avoid the double destruction of detachments by any single shell from the enemy. The remaining two guns were kept back on the reverse slope until the attack should develop, when they could be moved up by the gunners to the most suitable positions.

The trenches for infantry were made in short lengths of about 15 feet, and cut at first 2 feet wide. They connected up patches of furze bushes, which in this spot thickly covered the ground; natural traverses, so far as cover from view was concerned, being thus afforded to conceal the occupants of the trenches. The earth was strewn in front so as not to show up as a parapet. The trenches were designed to be made as deep as time would allow, and to continue to be strengthened during pauses in the fire, after the anticipated attack should commence. The trace of the trenches was not advanced down the front slope, but kept as far as possible to the crest of the RATH, for if the trenches had been more to the front there would have necessarily been covered ways leading rearwards of similar profile, and the construction of these would not have been possible in the limited time allowed; also, if constructed, the concealing them by cut furze bushes would have been difficult, and, being also plainly artificial, would not have deceived the enemy. The empty sand-bags were of the greatest possible service, not only for the gun epaulments, but also for the shelter trenches, as when filled they enabled slight breastworks to be built up at the most exposed places.

Strict instructions were given to the gun detachments to move about as little as possible; the guns to be always run

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up by hand for firing purposes, the detachments crouching down whilst performing this service.

The infantry reserves, both local and general, were established under good cover on the west side of WALSH'S RATH.

## *General Narrative.*

The situation at this stage of the operations was as follows:—

The Blue guns were all together at the STAND HOUSE (the remaining guns joining the advanced section at noon), but were established in a position which offered few advantages, except that of being within easy range of WALSH'S RATH. The Blue infantry were hopelessly dispersed. Four companies were at GIBBET RATH, where on arrival they found no enemy to meet them. The remaining battalion was on its way from HERBERT LODGE, where it had been stopped in its advance on KNOCK-AENACH by MAJOR N.; but its leading line of skirmishers was still half a mile away from the point of attack at WALSH'S RATH. The right squadron of cavalry was near the STAND HOUSE, and ready to join in any operation, but the left squadron was well away on the south of KNOCK-AENACH, and was therefore out of the calculation of available strength.

On the other hand, the Red infantry and guns were, as has been stated, strongly entrenched at WALSH'S RATH. The cavalry out on left and centre was drawn in. Every preparation had been completed, and the Western Force was ready to receive the expected attack, with all the

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advantages, moral and physical, which accrue to the side of the defence in modern warfare. It is, therefore, not surprising that shortly after midday the "Cease fire" was ordered to be sounded by the CHIEF UMPIRE, it being manifestly useless to proceed any further with the exercise.

*Summing up.*

The UMPIRES, COMMANDERS, and other officers concerned being assembled at WALSH'S RATH, the GENERAL OFFICER, having heard the reports of the UMPIRES, and questioned the COMMANDERS of the opposing forces as to their dispositions and the reasons for their various movements, made a few remarks on the whole situation. He said it was quite clear that the attack had no chance of success. The RED COMMANDER had made good arrangements and preparations at WALSH'S RATH, and had succeeded in deceiving his enemy as to the false position on KNOCK-AENACH RIDGE.

As regards the Blue COMMANDER, he should at the outset have sent patrols from the rendezvous towards NEWBRIDGE and towards ATHGARVAN. The Red COMMANDER provided for similar reconnaissance to each flank in his own case.

The Blue COMMANDER did not appear to have any good ground for separating the guns of his battery for the attack of WALSH'S RATH, and without some sufficient reason, except in mountain or irregular warfare, it is not generally considered advisable to do so. The Blue COMMANDER was not well served by his right squadron, which should have

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let him know earlier of the occupation of WALSH'S RATH by the Red infantry and by the field company.

*Comments.*

The difficulties experienced by MAJOR N. in having to change his plan of operations at a critical moment, plainly arose from the conclusion at which he seems to have arrived, from the very beginning, as to the enemy's probable action, when he was quite in the dark about the whole proceeding, and had no reliable data to go upon.

The enemy practised deception and arranged his project so as to meet all probable eventualities of the attack; not so the assailants, whose plans should have been on similar lines. Deception must be met by deception, and although it favours the defensive, owing to the attackers having occasionally to disclose their hand, through having, for example, to advance over and cross open spaces under view of the hidden defenders, yet the arrangements of the defence can be forced to be changed, or even disclosed by skilful feints and by cunning devices practised on part of the assailants.

If MAJOR N. had made a holding attack against the enemy at KNOCK-AENACH in time to keep the Western Force at that point, and meanwhile under cover of his cavalry squadrons executed a wide turning movement on MAJOR C.'s right, he would certainly have uncovered KILDARE, and would have rendered the success of MAJOR C.'s attempts to guard the town by occupying KNOCK-AENACH or WALSH'S RATH highly problematical.

The next point which comes up in studying the problem

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is the question of the dispersal or separation of the guns of a battery. It appears, from the experience we have lately gained, that in a country like SOUTH AFRICA, and with cunning opponents like the Boers, when it becomes impracticable to hide all the guns of a battery, it is sometimes expedient to split it up, although a loss of individual control over the unit as a whole results thereby. This is more often the case on the defensive to economize space, but even in the attack on comparatively open ground, as a full battery in motion is a most conspicuous target, it has been found advisable to detach sections, and even single guns, to act on occasion by themselves, the concealment of artillery being more than ever imperative. Although the conditions of future wars will certainly not always be similar to those which have lately obtained in SOUTH AFRICA, many of the new ideas which have originated in the Boer war will continue to influence the conduct of tactical operations. Amongst these the question of the desirability of splitting up a battery of field or horse artillery when common sense demands it will probably have a place. In the case of MAJOR N.'s guns there did not appear to be sufficient reason for breaking up the battery, in the opinion of the GENERAL, and this judgment was probably correct. It should have been evident to the Blue leader at the time he ordered the section of two guns to the STAND HOUSE, that the enemy was taking up his real position at WALSH'S RATH, and in that case every gun which the Eastern Force possessed should have been sent forward to harass the defenders while taking up their ground. The question of dispersal of guns at the new position should have been deferred till they got to the

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ground, and might safely have been left to the officers of the battery. If the fire of the Eastern guns was being masked at CAMP INN HILL, and another position offered itself at half a mile closer range to the new objective WALSH'S RATH, the whole battery, and not a portion of it only, should have been sent on. The sequel proved that this should have been done, the section of the battery being nearly overpowered by hostile artillery on its arrival at the STAND HOUSE. In other cases it might be right to break up the battery; in this case it was certainly wrong to do so.

The Red COMMANDER knew the value of entrenchments for both his guns and his men, and in using his field company of engineers to strengthen WALSH'S RATH with the spade, made good use of a valuable adjunct to the three other arms. He desired to maintain his artillery fire on the defensive up to the end, and provided hasty shelter for two guns by digging and heaping up slight parapets to protect the gunners from bullets, two guns being also concealed with furze bushes cut and arranged for that purpose; the remaining pieces on the reverse slopes, ready to be brought up by hand to open fire when the fight was well developed. All were dispersed as much as possible for the sake of concealment. It was therefore difficult for the Blue guns to decide exactly where the Red artillery was emplaced, and it was not desirable to waste their energies and ammunition in firing when a good result could not be obtained. It is seen by this example that the protection of the gunners by concealment or by natural or artificial cover (which is more easily practicable on the defence than in the attack) has more than ever become a

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matter of paramount interest. A light shield has been adopted experimentally for coast defence guns in permanent works, and there appears a disposition to advocate the extension of its use in some form or other to field artillery, even were a certain loss of mobility to result therefrom.[1]

[1] By no means a new question. The use of shields for the protection of gunners against the enemy's bullets was proposed and strongly advocated by the late Major-General C. B. Brackenbury, R.A., in various publications, and at lectures given at the Military Societies' Meetings, some years ago.

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# O.

## TACTICAL OPERATION AT THE CURRAGH.

(*See Maps* 7, 8.)

DETACHED COLUMN *v.* REAR GUARD.

*July* 3, 19—.

THIS scheme was set at the CURRAGH in July, 1894, and was worked out in full detail by the troops named as a manœuvre between opposing forces, in connection with training in field medical work of the Army Medical Service. The narrative of the operation was subsequently published in orders, with the remarks of the UMPIRES and of the GENERAL COMMANDING.

The author, having now been granted permission by the OFFICER IN COMMAND at the CURRAGH to make use of the scheme, has thoroughly revised the report, and brought the movements up to date in all particulars. The narrative has since been submitted to a careful topographical examination on the ground, by an officer expert in such matters.

In the original report of the movements, printed at the CURRAGH, references are constantly made by numbers to the numerous Raths which exist on the training-ground. Many of these Raths have no distinctive names, and at the time in question they had been given numbers, which were

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printed by hand on the 4-inch maps made use of by the garrison. The employment of these numbers has now fallen into disuse at the CAMP, and it is difficult to get a map which has them marked upon it. The AUTHOR has therefore dispensed with their aid in reporting the movements of the troops, and has given such descriptions of the different hills, their relative positions to one another and to surrounding objects, together with their heights, as may enable them to be traced out on the map when referred to in the narrative.

### *General Idea.*

The head of an Invading Force (Blue) marching on DUBLIN has reached NAAS. A column of the Home Army (Red) is operating on the eastern flank.

### *Special Idea. Invading Force (Blue).*

A rear guard of this force consisting of one troop hussars, one battery field artillery, East Kent Regt., and Royal Irish Fus., is about to move east from KILDARE by the KILDARE and NEWBRIDGE road. The most easterly portion of the force is at the road cutting near western edge of the CURRAGH. No forward move to be made till 9.40 a.m.

At 9.10 a.m. the COMMANDER, MAJOR C., receives the following despatch at the position of assembly, near KILDARE CROSS-ROADS.

"From O. Cg. DIVISION,
To O. Cg. REAR-GUARD.

"NEWBRIDGE,
*July* 3, 19—, 8.30 *a.m.*

"The main body is moving forward to NAAS. I wish

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you to follow, making your exit from the CURRAGH by the NEWBRIDGE road. Should your retirement be harassed, attack the enemy vigorously."

*Special Idea. Home Column (Red).*

At 9.45 a.m., at which hour the order quoted below is handed to the COMMANDER, LT.-COLONEL S., the Home Column, consisting of one troop dragoons, one battery field artillery, Royal Irish Regt., Hampshire Regt., Royal Munster Fus., bearer company, and field hospital, is thus situated: the mounted troops north of the road from HEADQUARTER BLOCK to FIELD'S HOTEL and east of the 400-feet knoll; the infantry east of RACE HORSE HILL; the field hospital and bearer company close to the CURRAGH boundary between the mounted troops and infantry; the whole facing east, but not to leave the position of assembly till 9.35 a.m. The order received is as follows:—

"CARNALWAY,
*July* 3, 19—, 8.30 *a.m.*

"Our patrols report that the enemy's main body has reached NEWBRIDGE, but that some of the troops had not left KILDARE at sunrise. Intercept and endeavour to destroy the rear guard while it is crossing the CURRAGH."

Topographical Hints:—From the central point of the CURRAGH encampment, NEWBRIDGE lies $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles N.E.; KILDARE is $3\frac{1}{4}$ miles W.; and CARNALWAY $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles E.

*Narrative. Invading Force (Blue).*

When MAJOR C. received the Special Idea at 9.10 a.m. he found his command disposed as follows: A vedette on

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the KILDARE road, about 700 yards from the western edge of the CURRAGH, supported by a half company of the Royal Irish Fus.; the remainder of the rear guard being at the cutting on the KILDARE—NEWBRIDGE road, near the western end of the CURRAGH.

On receipt of the despatch MAJOR C. ordered the detached troops to be drawn in. He then considered his plan, and issued the following "operation orders:"—

**Rear Guard Orders; by O. Cg. Blue Force.**

KILDARE CROSS-ROADS,

To Os. Cg. Units. *July* 3, 19—, 9.25 *a.m.*

1. The rear guard, as per margin, will cover the advance upon NAAS of our main body, and move off at 9.40 a.m., following the route of the KILDARE—NEWBRIDGE road.

*One troop.*
*One battery.*
*Royal Irish Fus.*
*East Kent Regt.*

2. If I am harassed by the enemy, I shall attack him vigorously.

3. The cavalry will proceed by GIBBET RATH, and reconnoitre towards HEADQUARTER BLOCK, and on the eastern flank, in which direction the enemy is reported to be.

4. The Royal Irish Fus. will march south of road, with advanced guard of two companies, in formation suitable for meeting attack from right front, or right. The East Kent Regt. will follow, and will furnish one company for right flank guard.

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5. The battery will march on north of the road in line with the infantry.

6. I shall be with the battery.

(Sd.) C.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

The O. Cg. Royal Irish Fus. detailed Nos. 1 and 2 Companies as advanced guard, under command of CAPTAIN F., and the O. Cg. East Kent Regt. detailed No. 1 Company as flank guard, under command of CAPTAIN H.

The advanced guard, preceded by scouts in extreme front, opened out No. 1 Company in skirmishing order at 5 paces interval, which was followed by No. 2 Company in support at 200 yards' distance in a similar formation. The rest of the leading battalion followed the advanced guard at 300 yards' distance, headed by No. 3 Company, having a half company in skirmishing order in front, and the other half company behind it in line of sections in fours. Nos. 4 and 5 Companies came next in a line of sections similarly formed, and Nos. 6, 7, and 8 Companies in a line of columns of sections completed the battalion.

The flank guard company of the East Kent Regt. covered itself on the extreme right flank by scouts, and marched as in file at distances between men of 6 paces, advancing on the right flank of the lines of skirmishers at an interval of 400 yards. The leading men of the flank guard got into touch with the extreme right of the advanced guard.

The guns marched on left of the infantry, north of the road, and were kept quite clear, so that they could be brought up into action at any required moment.



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At 10.5 a.m. the leading infantry of the rear guard, west of the junction of the GIBBET RATH and KILDARE—NEWBRIDGE roads (called CURRAGH CROSS-ROADS on map), fired on a troop of the Home cavalry near HERBERT LODGE. A few minutes later artillery fire was opened from CAMP INN HILL upon the leading Blue infantry.

The Blue artillery now moved rapidly to the north of GIBBET RATH, coming into action at 10.10 a.m. On taking up position, the Blue battery was shelled by the enemy's guns from CAMP INN HILL, and replied thereto at a range of 2300 yards. A battalion of Red infantry shortly appeared on the south side of CAMP INN HILL, and the Blue battery at once changed its target from the guns to infantry, and shelled the latter at 1900 yards.

At 10.20 a.m. the Blue artillery again changed target to the opposing guns, while the Blue infantry had advanced, and was disposed as follows:—

The two companies Royal Irish Fus. (original advanced guard) lined the north side of GIBBET RATH road to ST. LEGERS BOTTOMS, the remainder of the battalion being about 375-FEET KNOLL, just south of the NEWBRIDGE road, opposing the advance of a Red battalion from direction of CAMP INN HILL, and of several companies moving down from the STAND HOUSE towards the SADDLING HOUSE, which latter point the Red troops presently occupied.

At the same hour the East Kent Regt. was near HERBERT LODGE. Three companies of this battalion were brought up at 10.25 a.m. to ST. LEGERS BOTTOMS to reinforce the Royal Irish Fus. Almost simultaneously two other companies of the same battalion were sent by

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ROCKY KNOLL towards the SADDLING HOUSE, and the first three companies were ordered to join them. A combined attack by these five companies of the East Kent Regt. was now made upon this post, which was shortly carried by assault. The Red defenders retired on their supports towards the STAND HOUSE at 10.40 a.m., having lost heavily.

During the engagement the invading artillery, changing their position, came into action south of the NEWBRIDGE road, on the northern slopes of KNOLL 375, at 10.35 a.m.; target, the enemy's infantry west of CAMP INN HILL.

### *Narrative. Home Column (Red).*

When LIEUT.-COLONEL S. received the Special Idea for the Home Column[1] at 9.5 a.m. his force was thus situated at the position of assembly. The mounted troops north of road leading from HEADQUARTER BLOCK to FIELD'S HOTEL, and east of the 400-FEET KNOLL; the infantry east of RACE HORSE HILL; the field hospital and bearer company close to the CURRAGH boundary, between the mounted troops and infantry; the whole facing west.

Having considered the situation, the COMMANDER of the Home Column issued the following "operation orders:"—

### Attack Orders; by O. Cg. Red Force.

To Os. Cg. Units. RACE HORSE HILL,
*July* 3, 19—, 9.20 *a.m.*

1. The enemy's rear guard is crossing the CURRAGH from KILDARE to NEWBRIDGE.

[1] For Special Idea for Home Column, see page 271.

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2. I intend to intercept and attack the rear guard with my command as per margin.

*One troop.*
*One battery.*
*Royal Irish Regt.*
*Hampshire Regt.*
*Royal Munster Fus.*
*Bearer company.*
*Field Hospital.*

3. Cavalry will reconnoitre to the west, and bring me full information as to the enemy.

4. Artillery will take post on FREETHS HILLS, with escort of one company Royal Irish Regt.

5. The Royal Irish Regt. (less one company) will advance to the CURRAGH northern boundary to head off the rear guard. The Royal Munster Fus. will move to east of CAMP INN HILL, followed by the Hampshire Regt., and await orders.

6. Field hospital to be fixed near FIELD'S HOTEL, with dressing and collecting stations as considered advisable.

7. I shall be with the artillery.

(Sd.) S.,
LIEUT.-COLONEL.

Issued personally in writing.

At 9.35 a.m. the Home Column moved from its rendezvous. The artillery and its escort established themselves at FREETHS HILLS, whilst the infantry went on to CAMP INN HILL. At 9.45 a.m. LIEUT.-COLONEL S., having received a report from his cavalry, rode off to CAMP INN HILL with an orderly. On his way he sent the orderly back with an order for the guns to follow him. The battery, on receipt of this, started off at a trot, leaving the escort to follow, and reached CAMP INN HILL just before 10 a.m. Here the guns took up position facing west, and came into action; target, the enemy's infantry near the CURRAGH CROSS-ROADS, the range being 2500 yards.

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The two leading infantry battalions of the Home Column commenced to arrive at the eastern side of CAMP INN HILL in the prescribed order shortly after 10 a.m., and the Royal Irish Regt. passed through the cross-roads north of CAMP INN HILL about the same hour. The Home cavalry near HERBERT LODGE soon sent word that it had been repeatedly fired at by the invading infantry, who were on each side of the road with artillery also present.

The artillery of the invading force now came into action at GIBBET RATH, and the Home artillery shelled them at once, the range being 2300 yards. An exchange of fire took place, but on the Munster Fus. showing themselves on the south side of CAMP INN HILL, the Blue artillery changed its target rapidly in order to fire at the Red infantry. This advance of the Fusiliers from the shelter of the disused gravel-pits was not authorized by LIEUT.-COLONEL S., and in fact, being at another part of the hill, he was unaware of its having been made until the battalion had advanced a considerable distance under fire of the hostile guns. The Fusiliers then took cover, and as they were in a very open formation their losses, although severe during the first few minutes, were not continuous. The Blue artillery soon gave it up, and changed their target back again to the Red artillery. The latter, however, were posted behind the summit of CAMP INN HILL, and fairly well covered.

At 10.15 a.m. the Royal Irish Regt. reached the BALLYMANY road at the point of its exit from the CURRAGH. The position of the invading infantry was now clearly seen; some companies lining the slopes north of GIBBET RATH road to ST. LEGERS BOTTOMS, and a larger force occupying

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KNOLL 375, just south of NEWBRIDGE road. Other infantry were near HERBERT LODGE, from which point it appeared as if they were being brought up to reinforce the troops at ST. LEGERS BOTTOMS.

A portion of the Royal Irish Regt. of the Home Column had by now moved down from the STAND HOUSE as far as the SADDLING HOUSE, which, together with the neighbouring ridge, it occupied.

The Blue infantry, seeing this, immediately collected some companies for the attack of the SADDLING HOUSE, and advanced for that purpose in widely extended order, taking advantage of the large amount of cover afforded by the ground.

The SADDLING HOUSE was carried by assault by the invading infantry at 10.40 a.m., the defenders of the Royal Irish Regt. retiring on their supports which were about the STAND HOUSE, having lost two companies as decided by the UMPIRES.

### *General Narrative.*

At 10.45 a.m. the situation was as follows. The Blue rear guard was occupying 375 KNOLL (north of ST. LEGERS BOTTOMS) strongly, with Royal Irish Fus. and part of the East Kent Regt. Five companies of the East Kent occupied the SADDLING HOUSE post. The invading artillery was in action just south of the NEWBRIDGE road on the north slopes of KNOLL 375 facing east; the position being not very well covered.

The Home Column, for the purposes of attack which it had intended to make on the main body of the rear guard when opportunity offered, had now for the moment lost the

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advantage of its superior force of infantry, the Royal Irish Battalion, which was to have joined in the movement, having separated itself by the want of adherence to orders, and had suffered great and unnecessary losses; what remained of the battalion being, moreover, detached on the extreme right, whence it could not co-operate with the main force of infantry. The Royal Munster Fus. was also not intact. It should not have left the shelter of the disused gravel pits until directed, and had already lost many men from the Blue artillery shrapnel fire without effecting any good purpose.

The intention of the HOME COMMANDER had been to deliver a holding attack upon the enemy in front, if found on his direct line of advance, with the Royal Irish Regt., and to push home a decisive attack on his right flank with the Royal Munster Fus. and the Hampshire Regt.

This was now impossible, and nothing remained but to endeavour to carry the position assumed at KNOLL 375 by the main force of the invaders, a frontal attack being apparently a necessity. The attack would be supported by the Home artillery from CAMP INN HILL.

The HOME COMMANDER accordingly gave personal orders to this effect to the two battalion commanders, and at 10.55 a.m. an advance was made against KNOLL 375.

The Royal Munster Fus. led the attack, being formed in several skirmishing lines, with two companies in each line forming their own supports. The Hampshire Regt. followed at first, but eventually moved out its leading companies and prolonged the line of attack on the left flank, four companies being held back as general reserve. The position was, however, too strong, and after suffering

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heavy losses in the advance, a weak assault being made by the leading companies, the attack was decided by the UMPIRES to have failed, with a loss of one-third by the assailants, half the strength of the Royal Irish Fus. engaged in the defence, and one section of the East Kent Regt. also belonging to the Blue Force.

After this a pause ensued in the operations, and the troops engaged in the attack were ordered to fall back to CAMP INN HILL.

At 11.15 a.m. the advance again sounded, and the Blue infantry at the SADDLING HOUSE of the East Kent Regt. pushed on to the attack of the enemy's position east of the STAND HOUSE, which was held by the remaining companies of the Royal Irish Regt. After a struggle the position was captured by the East Kent Regt., and the companies holding it of the Royal Irish Regt. were put out of action by the UMPIRES.

At 11.20 a.m. the artillery of the Blue Force changed their position to the west of the SADDLING HOUSE, and came into action against two companies of the Hampshire Regt. advancing northwards from CAMP INN HILL.

At 11.25 a.m. the Blue guns again moved to a position east of the STAND HOUSE. The companies of the East Kent Regt. which had been engaged at the STAND HOUSE, now swung round and advanced in concert against the two companies of the Hampshire Regt. from CAMP INN HILL, being assisted by two companies of the Royal Irish Fus. from KNOLL 375, and supported by the fire of Blue artillery. In face of these troops the Hampshire companies fell back again to CAMP INN HILL.

Encouraged by this success, the COMMANDER of the Blue

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rear guard made a determined attempt to break through and reach the NEWBRIDGE road with his main body. A general advance was commenced by the East Kent Regt. and by the Royal Irish Fus. from KNOLL 375, along the north side of CAMP INN HILL, backed up by the fire of Blue artillery from the STAND HOUSE. The two Hampshire Regt. companies, which had again shown themselves in the interval, now had to give way; but presently the rest of the Home Column emerged from the south side of CAMP INN HILL, where it had taken cover, and, aided by the fire of the artillery on CAMP INN HILL, soon made short work of the Blue Force, whose flank was thus exposed to a heavy fire at close range. The destruction of the rear guard was thus practically accomplished by the remaining troops of the Home Column, and the "Cease fire" was ordered to be sounded by the UMPIRES.

### *Care for the Wounded during the Action.*

On receiving instructions at the commencement of the operations from the COMMANDER of the Home Column, the field hospital was pitched in a hollow at the rendezvous close to FIELD'S HOTEL, where it was well sheltered from any fire. A good road communicated with the front, and rendered it easy to transport the wounded; water and stabling were quite conveniently situated.

The bearer company cautiously advanced in rear of the troops, and established their first field dressing-station in a well-protected, sheltered spot east of HEADQUARTER BLOCK; five ambulance wagons remained there. A spring of water was available.

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At the same time, the stretcher-bearers and five other ambulances, together with the water-cart, advanced still further, for a distance of about 1200 yards, seeking shelter as they went on, and established a collecting-station under cover of CAMP INN HILL. This position was about 700 yards behind the firing line (assumed to be at the west crest of CAMP INN HILL), and was so well protected that neither men nor ambulances were in the least exposed. A flag with the red cross hoisted on a hill close by was easily seen, and rendered the collection of the wounded quick and easy. The stretcher-bearers extended well to the front during the action, and they and the regimental bearers carried in all the serious cases, those suffering from slight wounds walking in.

The wounded were quickly transported by ambulance to the dressing-station, and thence to the field hospital. Ninety-five were sent on, all of whom were admitted.

| | |
|---|---|
| Gunshot wounds, 49 slight, 7 severe, 3 dangerous ... | 59 |
| Bayonet wounds, 20 slight, 3 severe, 1 dangerous ... | 24 |
| Sabre and other wounds ... ... ... ... ... | 12 |
| Total ... ... | 95 |

## *Summing up.*

The CHIEF UMPIRE, having brought together the COMMANDERS of the Red and Blue Forces and other troop leaders, as well as the ASSISTANT UMPIRES, an examination was first made of the arrangements for caring for the wounded during the action, which were pronounced to be satisfactory. The inspection terminated at RACE HORSE HILL, where all the officers concerned were finally assembled.

The ASSISTANT UMPIRE with the Invading Force was

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asked his opinion on the operations. He said the Blue cavalry did not seem to have sent in any information. Hence the presence of Red guns on CAMP INN HILL was not known until their shells fell amongst the Blue infantry at the CURRAGH CROSS-ROADS. Nor was the advance of the Royal Irish Regt. along the northern CURRAGH boundary reported to the REAR GUARD COMMANDER.

The artillery had a difficult task to perform, as is always the case in a rear-guard action, but an undue want of decision was observed in their movements. They took up a position, only to change it after a few rounds for another not much better. During the day the Blue artillery suffered loss, but this was inevitable. The infantry showed both intelligence and enterprise.

On the whole, the INVADING COMMANDER had no easy game to play, and he kept his troops well in hand. At the end of the operations he made a mistake in attempting to push past the troops at CAMP INN HILL, thereby exposing his flank to their fire. He appeared to have altogether under-estimated the strength still remaining in the battalions repulsed from KNOLL 375, and which were then sheltering at CAMP INN HILL.

The ASSISTANT UMPIRE with the Home Column said that on his side the cavalry sent in accurate and timely information. The action of the Red artillery on CAMP INN HILL was a marked feature in the day's operations. They took up a partly concealed and good position, and maintained a valuable fire from it, without shifting a gun during the day. They, however, reached CAMP INN HILL quite unescorted by cavalry or infantry, which was a very dangerous proceeding.

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The infantry of the Home Column were rather out of hand. The orders issued appeared to have been clear and explicit, but they were either not understood or they were not fully carried out. The battalion on the right, which was to have combined with the others for a principal attack upon the enemy, acted independently, and ended by being put out of action without effecting much good. Of the other two battalions, one of them left its shelter too soon, and in an unauthorized manner advanced before it was wanted, and suffered severe losses. The COMMANDER of the Home Column could not be held responsible for these mistakes, but his attack on KNOLL 375 was not a success for obvious reasons.

The CHIEF UMPIRE said he quite agreed with the conclusions come to by the ASSISTANT UMPIRES, and their observations were very valuable. He himself was especially pleased with the action of the Home artillery on CAMP INN HILL. If there was a point to criticize, it was that the battery was a little too far back. Slightly more advanced, the guns would have commanded ground over which the invaders' infantry moved with impunity.

The formation of the BLUE rear guard moving from KILDARE was fairly good. The ground being favourable to extended order, the troops were spread out in sufficiently open formations. It ought not to have been worth the while of the Home artillery to open fire on the Blue infantry at CURRAGH CROSS-ROADS, and they did not derive much benefit from thus early disclosing the position of their guns.

The subsequent conduct of the Blue infantry, until CAMP INN HILL was reached later in the day, was on the

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whole to be commended. Acting on interior lines, it succeeded in defeating the attack on KNOLL 375, notwithstanding the superior numbers opposed to it.

As regards the Home column infantry, it was quite out of hand, and the COMMANDER'S plans were unable to be carried out because his orders were not intelligently obeyed. At the end of the day, however, when the COMMANDER had again got hold of the remnant of his force, the Red infantry acted well against the Blue rear guard; the latter completing the day's movements by an error in judgment, in attempting to force a way to the NEWBRIDGE road with a still active enemy on the flank within decisive range.

## *Comments.*

The main lesson to be derived from a study of this problem is that combination, when assisted by its handmaiden mobility, becomes of much value, as it enables a force to concentrate a greater amount of fire power at the opportune moment, and then by co-operation to overcome quickly a given resistance, which would take a much longer time and a much larger force to subdue, if the pressure were applied intermittently and without cohesive effort.

This apparent truism has to be reiterated, as principles are apt to be overlooked in the pressing attention which details demand.

The want of grasp of the scheme as a whole by some of the subordinate leaders, and failure to take the correct initiative, might have been due to lack of experience and training, or else to the fact that the original conception

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of his plan was not sufficiently explained by the COMMANDER, when handing over the orders of the Home column to the various troop leaders.

Speaking generally, the human element, which varies with the temperament of the subordinate commander, has to be considered, and only constant training with others under many different conditions will tend to make this less variable and more reliable. Such training would possibly stop the isolated ambitions of individuals who may wish, right or wrong, to pursue their own erroneous ideas, and thus endanger the general plan.

The importance of providing a mounted escort for guns, which may have to shift position very rapidly, and might otherwise be cut off in doing so, is also brought forward in this scheme.

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# P.

## TACTICAL OPERATION AT THE CURRAGH.

(*See Maps* 7, 8.)

### Attack and Defence of a Convoy.

*August* 1, 19—.

The General and Special Ideas for this scheme have been suggested by an officer well acquainted with the Curragh ground. The details of the operation have been worked out by the Author, and the movements on the west bank of the river are based to a certain extent on an episode of actual warfare, related to him long ago by an actor in the scene. The scheme on completion has been submitted to the opinion of Umpires, whose remarks are paraphrased in the "summing up." The "comments" are also furnished by another Critic.

The topographical conditions of the exercise have been subjected to careful examination on the ground by an officer expert in such matters.

The study is put forward for special consideration, on account of its dealing with the absolute necessity of mobility as an element of success in any raiding operation.

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*General Idea.*

An Eastern Force is operating from NAAS, and holds the G.S. and W. RAILWAY as far as POLLARDSTOWN BRIDGE, the western portion of the line being destroyed.

A Western Force has advanced troops about KILDARE.

CURRAGH CAMP is not occupied.

*Special Idea. Eastern Force (Red).*

An important convoy is to be sent from NEWBRIDGE STATION, G.S. and W. RAILWAY, to a CAMP at STEVENSTOWN CROSS-ROADS. The OFFICER IN COMMAND at NEWBRIDGE receives the following instructions as to the escort:—

"NAAS, *July* 31, 19—.

"The convoy should start not later than 10 a.m. to-morrow, so as to reach the CAMP before the men's dinner-hour. Hostile cavalry and mounted infantry have both been reported in the neighbourhood of KILDARE within the last two days. Move the convoy on the east bank of the LIFFEY, and have a strong flank guard on the west bank. Let the escort consist of a battalion, two squadrons, and some horse artillery guns, the stores being of special value and importance. Put a good man in command.

"By Order, S.,
"A.A.G."

N.B.—Rendezvous: NEWBRIDGE STATION, 9.30 a.m., August 1, 19—. No troops to move till 10 a.m. MAJOR X. to command Eastern Force.

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*Special Idea. Western Force (Blue).*

Information by spies having been received to effect that a valuable convoy of stores will leave NEWBRIDGE to-morrow, August 1, at 10 a.m., to move along the right bank of the LIFFEY, the OFFICER IN COMMAND at KILDARE is ordered to send a raiding-party to attack and capture the convoy. The force will consist of one squadron cavalry, one section (two guns) of horse artillery, and two sections mounted infantry.

N.B.—Rendezvous: TULLY WEST CROSS-ROADS at 9.50 a.m., August 1, 19—. No troops to move till 10.20 a.m. MAJOR Y. to command Western Force.

Topographical Hints:—From central point of CURRAGH ENCAMPMENT, KILDARE lies $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles W.; NEWBRIDGE STATION lies $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles N.N.E.; NAAS lies 8 miles N.E.; STEVENSTOWN CROSS-ROADS are $5\frac{3}{4}$ miles E.N.E.; KILCULLEN BRIDGE $3\frac{1}{4}$ miles E.S.E.; TULLY WEST CROSS-ROADS 3 miles W.; and MOTEENARON RATH 2 miles S.E.

*Narrative. Eastern Force (Red).*

On MAJOR X. being handed a copy of the General Idea and also of the Special Idea for the Eastern Force at NEWBRIDGE STATION on August 1, at 9.30 a.m., his STAFF OFFICER also reported himself for duty. MAJOR X. begged him to see that the convoy was all ready to start punctually at 10 a.m., and that the escort was present. The COMMANDER then took out his map and went into one of the waiting-rooms to consider the situation. It appeared to him that, once across the river at NEWBRIDGE, the route



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to STEVENSTOWN CROSS-ROADS was only assailable at four points, CONNELL'S FORD, ATHGARVAN, KILCULLEN, and NEW BRIDGES; the LIFFEY being at this part of its course a river of sufficient volume to form an obstacle practically impassable, except at the recognized points of passage. A strong flank guard on the west bank, as suggested in the Special Idea, would be, no doubt, an efficient protection; in addition to which he would detail a considerable proportion of the escort as a covering body on the east bank, which would be able to furnish detachments to guard the crossing-points, and have also some remaining companies to act independently as required. The order of march of the escort next engaged the attention of the COMMANDER. When he had determined this, the STAFF OFFICER returned and informed him that the troops were present, consisting of a battalion of rifles, two squadrons of hussars, and two sections (four guns) of horse artillery.[1] The convoy was composed of forty wagons, which were drawn up on the road south of the station.

MAJOR X. now proceeded to draft his "operation orders."

**Convoy Orders; by O. Cg. Eastern Force (Red).**

No. 1. NEWBRIDGE STATION,
To Os. Cg. Units. *August* 1, 19—, 9.45 *a.m*

1. The enemy is reported to be at KILDARE.
2. The convoy ordered to proceed to STEVENSTOWN CROSS-

[1] It is presumed that, owing to a temporary paucity of troops at the CURRAGH, one horse artillery battery only was available at the time of the exercise to provide artillery for both sides.

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ROADS will move by the east bank of the LIFFEY. It will be escorted by the troops under my command, viz. one battalion infantry, two squadrons cavalry, two sections horse artillery.

3. The infantry and one troop will guard the convoy on the east bank, as per "Escort orders." The cavalry (less one troop) and guns will form a flank guard on the west bank, as per "Flank Guard orders."

4. Communication by signalling will be established by the cavalry from MONTEENARON, or some other suitable RATH on west bank, to the GREEN HILLS on east bank.

5. I shall be with the convoy on east bank.

(Sd.) X.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

### Escort Orders; by O. Cg. Eastern Force (Red).

No. 2. NEWBRIDGE STATION,
To O. Cg. Escort. *August* 1, 19—, 9.45 *a.m.*

1. The escort on east bank will be as follows: COMMANDER, MAJOR L.; one company, advanced guard; one company, rear guard; one company, guards for wagons; five companies, with machine gun, covering or main body. The advanced guard will lead the convoy by CONNELLMORE HOUSE, ROSETOWN CROSS-ROADS, and MELAN HILL, to the CAMP at STEVENSTOWN CROSS-ROADS.

2. The covering party will move off at ordinary pace in front of the advanced guard. It will leave a company to hold CONNELL FORD, and a company to hold ATHGARVAN BRIDGE, as it passes these points. The convoy and

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immediate escort will follow the covering party at a pace of 2½ miles per hour.

3. A troop of cavalry (1st troop B Squadron) will be in front to scout for the enemy.

(Sd.) X.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

**Flank Guard Orders; by O. Cg. Eastern Force (Red).**

No. 3. NEWBRIDGE STATION,
To O. Cg. Flank Guard. *August* 1, 19—, 9.45 *a.m.*

1. The flank guard on west bank will be as follows: COMMANDER, MAJOR K.; A and B Squadrons (less one troop on east bank); with two sections (four guns) of horse artillery.

2. The flank guard will advance south on left bank of river, keeping up communication by signalling with the right bank.

3. The flank guard will find the enemy if he is present, and will not allow him to cross the river to the right bank. It will act throughout in concert with the escort on the east bank.

(Sd.) X.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

Before the troops marched off, the COMMANDER arranged with MAJOR L., in charge of the escort on east bank, and MAJOR K. of the flank guard, that the former, if all went well, should leave the route of the convoy at ROSETOWN

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Cross-roads and march with three companies of the covering party to Kilcullen Bridge. Major K. on his part was to rendezvous at the same spot, to complete his protection of the flank. Major L. thought his companies could arrive at Kilcullen Bridge a little before noon. Major K. said he would also be there by that time or even sooner, unless unduly delayed by the enemy.

The troops moved off at 10 a.m. The Commander of the flank guard detailed two troops, 2nd and 3rd of B Squadron, one to precede him along the river-bank at a rapid pace to reconnoitre and look out for the enemy, the other to cross the Curragh Camp by Magazine road, and search for signs of the enemy in direction of French Furze and Brownstown. These troops, on getting their orders, started off at a smart trot. The rest of the flank guard advanced at a slower pace to Athgarvan Bridge, the 4th troop of B Squadron acting as escort to the guns.

At 10.32 Major K. was at Athgarvan with A Squadron and the guns. Leaving a troop at the Bridge, he went on to Race Horse Hill, which he reached at 10.45 a.m. Here he received news by signal from each of the scouting troops. The 2nd troop to the south signalled from the flagstaff at Mootenaron, "No enemy in sight." The 3rd to the west signalled from the Water Tower,[1] "Enemy at French Furze." Major K. now moved the flank guard troops to Monument Hill, where he brought his battery up very carefully behind the crest of the summit facing west. The guns, advancing at full intervals, were halted,

[1] The Curragh Water Tower stands in centre of the Camp between E and F squares. It is 100 feet high, and affords an extensive view from its summit.

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while the teams were still well covered by the ground, the lead and centre horses were taken out, and the guns brought up still further with the wheelers. They then came into action under cover, and were run up by hand to their respective positions. The wagons and teams were well protected by the hill, and no signs of the presence of guns had been permitted to be seen by any enemy on the western side of the position. The cavalry dismounted and kept their horses also out of sight.

A messenger from the 3rd troop out west now came in. He bore a report from the officer to say the enemy, mounted infantry and cavalry, was at FRENCH FURZE as signalled, in what strength could not yet be said, but his advance was stopped. It was now 10.50 a.m.

Meanwhile the 3rd troop, from whom the report came, had barely got beyond the MAGAZINE road at 10.30 a.m. before the leading scouts saw Blue scouts out in the direction of FRENCH FURZE. The troop officer hid his men behind some houses and increased the number of his scouts, so that they were able to work round the flanks of the enemy after a time.

The Blue troops appeared to have reached FRENCH FURZE at 10.35 a.m., and to have been about to move off again when they detected Red scouts in their front. They halted for a few moments, but before long a cloud of scouts came galloping up towards the CAMP, as if determined to find out what was in front of them. Here they were received with dismounted fire from the third Red troop concealed at the southern entrance to the CAMP of BROWNSTOWN road, and fell back quicker than they came.

The Red troop now mounted and rode down to the

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CONSTABULARY BARRACKS, where it again dismounted, and, leaving the horses behind the building, commenced to skirmish towards FRENCH FURZE. When the men got about 200 yards in that direction, they came under a heavy long-range infantry fire from the direction of FRENCH FURZE. The Red cavalry took the best cover they could, but lost a few men. Finally they retired behind the BARRACKS. The signallers of the troop at 10.45 a.m. got into communication with RACE HORSE HILL by help of the party at MOTEENARON, by which means they were able to inform the COMMANDER of the flank guard of the presence of the enemy at FRENCH FURZE. A messenger was also sent from the troop at the CONSTABULARY BARRACKS to look for the COMMANDER in the neighbourhood of RACE HORSE HILL, giving him the same news in a written form.

Soon after MAJOR K. got the report from the third troop, he perceived that the enemy seemed determined to push on, as he could make out with his glasses mounted infantry and cavalry advancing on the north side of FRENCH FURZE, and along the main road. Presently he saw the fire of a small number of guns opened from near FRENCH FURZE upon the BROWNSTOWN BARRACKS.

MAJOR K. now sent his escort troop (No. 4 of B Squadron) to the point in the CAMP where WINDYGAP road crossed it, to look out for any flank movement against the guns. He also ordered A Squadron to mount and to move carefully, by covered routes, to the neighbourhood of JOCKEY HALL, whence a good look-out was to be held on the enemy, and any attempt on his part to advance by the BALLYSAX road towards KILCULLEN BRIDGE to be stopped

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at once. The COMMANDER of this squadron, which was already minus a troop left at ATHGARVAN BRIDGE, was directed to get into touch with the 2nd troop of B Squadron, and to call it into his command if possible. This troop had the signalling-station at MOTEENARON, and an officer was to be sent there from A squadron to instruct the signallers to communicate with the GREEN HILLS, or other eminence on the east bank of the LIFFEY where signallers could be sighted. Information of the presence of Blue troops to be sent, and concentration of Red flank guard and Red covering party before noon at KILCULLEN BRIDGE to be still considered best move on the cards. The A Squadron moved off as directed, and by 11.15 a.m. it had reached the position assigned to it, and also carried out the instructions as regards communicating with the east bank by means of the signallers at MOTEENARON. The 2nd troop-B Squadron joined A Squadron near JOCKEY HALL soon after this.

The fire from the guns at FRENCH FURZE was not continued for long, the advance of their own mounted troops soon masking the artillery fire.

The BROWNSTOWN BARRACKS was about a mile from MONUMENT HILL, and when the Blue guns opened fire upon it, MAJOR K. had sent an orderly with a message to the 3rd troop to direct them to retire in direction of JOCKEY HALL as soon as the Blue cavalry approached them. Accordingly, as the Blue troops got within 500 yards of the BARRACKS the Red troop remounted and retired at a rapid pace, opening out into open order as they did so. This troop of the Red force also eventually joined A Squadron, and remained with it for the rest of the day.

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It was now past 11 o'clock, and the enemy seemed very impatient at being so long delayed, his artillery fire having in consequence been spasmodic. MAJOR K. noted that the Blue mounted infantry and cavalry were extended at broad intervals in rank entire, with supports some distance in rear. Their front extended from the southern edge of the CAMP buildings to the north side of the BALLYSAX road. As the Blue guns ceased firing they limbered up and followed the mounted troops, which gave MAJOR K. an opportunity of seeing with his glasses that they were only two in number.

At 11.5 a.m. the Blue advance reached the BARRACKS, when MAJOR K. ordered his battery of four guns to open fire upon them at 1800 yards' range. This was done, to the great surprise of the Blue cavalry and mounted infantry. The latter had just passed the north side of the CONSTABULARY BARRACKS, and were in rather compact formation at the moment, as the SEWAGE FARM caused them to close up in order to get by this obstacle. They accordingly suffered some loss, but they promptly galloped ahead, and got clear of the FARM enclosure. The Blue cavalry scattered on the north side of the main road, and the section of artillery came galloping up to the BARRACKS. Here the guns unlimbered, and commenced to shell the summit of MONUMENT HILL, whence the fire of the Red guns appeared to come. So admirably were the latter concealed that not a sign of the guns or gunners could be detected, and nothing but the faint puffs of smoke on firing and the modified noise of the detonation betrayed the presence of the Red guns. The action of the Blue artillery drew a disabling return fire from the Red battery,

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and at 11.15 a.m. the UMPIRES put both guns of the Blue Force out of action.

The narrative must now be transferred to the east bank, in order to relate how the convoy had got on during progress of the foregoing action on the west bank.

MAJOR X. marched at the head of the covering party, which duly left a company at CONNELL FORD, and another company at ATHGARVAN BRIDGE, as these places were respectively reached.

At 11.5 a.m. the COMMANDER was about half a mile north of ROSETOWN CROSS-ROADS, and well in advance of the convoy, which followed at a slower pace. He was accompanied by MAJOR L., who had with him the remaining three companies of the covering party. At this time, the wind being south-west, MAJOR X. distinctly heard the firing of his horse-artillery guns, which were evidently in action somewhere south of HEADQUARTER BLOCK.

At 11.15 a.m. the COMMANDER reached ROSE TOWN CROSS-ROADS, where with the covering party he left the route of the convoy, and proceeded across KILCULLEN BRIDGE across country, having secured a guide at a cabin near by. At 11.20 a.m. he received a message from the 1st troop B Squadron, which had signallers on the GREEN HILLS (close to his line of march), and had got into communication with the Red cavalry on west bank. By this means MAJOR X. was made acquainted with what had occurred, and accordingly pushed forward to the rendezvous at KILCULLEN BRIDGE. His reports from the 1st troop as to the absence of all signs of the enemy from any portion

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of the ground on the east bank, from KILCULLEN to NEW BRIDGE, were highly satisfactory. He directed the commander of the 1st troop to attend exclusively to the watching of NEW BRIDGE from the time when the Red infantry should arrive at KILCULLEN BRIDGE.

*Narrative. Western Force (Blue).*

On MAJOR Y. being handed a copy of the General Idea and also of the Special Idea[1] for the Western Force at TULLY WEST CROSS-ROADS on August 1, 19—, at 9.50 a.m., he found his STAFF OFFICER and the troops to form his command all present. He took his papers into a place of shelter and consulted his map. It appeared to him that the best points of passage for a raid across the river on to the convoy, were at ATHGARVAN and KILCULLEN BRIDGES. A passage at NEW BRIDGE would be too near the CAMP to which the convoy was directed, and which was reported, moreover, to be entrenched, and strongly held, being a depôt for stores.

MAJOR Y. therefore determined to do his best to get over ATHGARVAN BRIDGE, and failing that, to make a dash for KILCULLEN BRIDGE. He issued the following "Operation orders:"—

**Attack Orders; by O. Cg. Western Force (Blue).**

No. 1. FULBY WEST CROSS-ROADS,
To Os. Cg. Units. *August* 1, 19—, 10.5 *a.m.*

1. A convoy of valuable stores belonging to the enemy

[1] For Special Idea Western Force, see page 289.

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is to move to-day from NEWBRIDGE to STEVENSTOWN CROSS-ROADS, by the east bank of the LIFFEY.

2. I intend to capture the convoy with my command, as per margin, by an attack across ATHGARVAN or KILCULLEN BRIDGES.

*One squadron.*
*One section H. A.*
*Two sections M. I.*

3. The force will advance at 10.20 a.m. towards ATHGARVON by TULLY EAST CROSS-ROADS. On reaching the CURRAGH at FRENCH FURZE, open formations will be assumed. Scouts from the cavalry will cover front and flanks.

4. If the road to ATHGARVAN BRIDGE be blocked by the enemy, the force will move rapidly on KILCULLEN BRIDGE and cross the river at that point.

5. I shall be with the horse artillery on the main road.

(Sd.) Y.,
MAJOR.

Issued personally in writing.

At 10.20 a.m. the troops moved off. On arriving at FRENCH FURZE with scouts in front, one section of mounted infantry extended in rank entire at 10 paces' intervals, with its right on the KILDARE—BALLYSAX road, and covering about 300 paces of frontage, the other section following as support in similar formation at 100 yards' distance. The cavalry squadron furnished an escort of half a troop to the guns, and half a troop for the scouts in front. Of the remainder, two troops prolonged the line to the left in an analogous formation to that of the mounted infantry, covering about 500 yards of frontage, and the fourth troop was in support. The guns with their escort kept to the road.

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At 10.30 a.m. the leading scouts at FRENCH FURZE sighted some hostile scouts at the south side of the CAMP, north of the rifle ranges. They reported it back to the COMMANDER, who shortly came up to FRENCH FURZE. By this time the Red scouts were no longer visible, but the COMMANDER halted his guns and reinforced the Blue scouts, who advanced boldly in the direction of the central part of the CAMP. When they got nearer they were saluted by the fire of men concealed amongst the buildings, and had to fall back.

MAJOR Y. was giving orders to the mounted infantry to dismount and open fire, when he saw the Red cavalry emerge mounted from between the buildings north of the rifle ranges, and move rapidly down to the BROWNSTOWN CONSTABULARY BARRACKS, behind which building they disappeared again for a few minutes, but presently advanced dismounted and began to skirmish towards FRENCH FURZE, taking good advantage of cover.

MAJOR Y. dismounted one of the sections at the eastern crest of FRENCH FURZE, and poured in a heavy fire on the Red cavalry, apparently about a troop strong only, at long range, before they had advanced more than a couple of hundred yards from the BARRACKS. At 10.45 a.m. the Red troop, apparently finding their enemy too strong for them, retreated again to the BARRACKS, whence they relieved their feelings by sniping shots from the windows at the Blue troops.

MAJOR Y. now ordered the infantry to remount, and prepared again to advance. To prepare the way for this, his artillery came into action close to the road, and opened fire on the CONSTABULARY BARRACKS, which was about

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2000 yards off. The Blue half troop in front had by this time advanced close up to the CAMP, under instructions from MAJOR Y., who had directed them to see if the road to ATHGARVAN was held by the enemy. The Blue mounted infantry resumed its extended formation and again advanced on the north side of the BALLYSAX road, with the cavalry as before on its left flank. The guns, finding their fire masked by their own troops, soon limbered up and followed. As the line approached the BARRACKS and got within 500 yards of it, the Red troop galloped out suddenly from behind the buildings, extending into scattered order as it moved rapidly along the north side of the BALLYSAX road in direction of KILCULLEN.

At 11 a.m. MAJOR Y. got a message from his cavalry, which had entered the CAMP to say that the way to ATHGARVAN was blocked at WINDY GAP road by hostile cavalry on the watch, and that, as far as could be ascertained, MONUMENT HILL was also held by Red troops.

MAJOR Y. now saw that there was no hope of his getting through to ATHGARVAN BRIDGE unopposed, either by the road through the CAMP or by the north side of the CAMP, and that he had lost too much time already in a petty engagement. He decided to make a push for KILCULLEN BRIDGE, and made this known to the troop leaders. As the enemy had retreated from the BARRACKS, he gave the word to trot, and the line advanced rapidly, following the route of the BALLYSAX road.

At 11.5 a.m. the Blue Force had just passed the BARRACKS, when an unexpected artillery fire was opened upon them from MONUMENT HILL at a range of about 1800 yards. The mounted infantry just at this moment,

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finding some obstacles to their continued advance in open order on the north side of the main road, inclined to their right, and were in rather closer formation than was prudent when a battery was opened upon them. They accordingly lost several men, but did the best thing possible, which was to gallop on till they got clear of the SEWAGE FARM, and open out again south of the ranges. The Red artillery, however, did not trouble the Blue mounted infantry further, their fire being turned on the cavalry, which scattered and galloped about west of the rifle ranges, looking for cover. The Blue guns now came charging up, and found a position, fairly but not very well covered, near the BARRACKS. From this they opened fire on MONUMENT HILL, but could literally see nothing of their target, the Red guns, which were artistically posted. The fire, therefore, effected no other purpose than to direct the attention of the enemy to the Blue guns. The Red artillery accordingly changed their target to the hostile guns, and presently disabled them both, so that the UMPIRES put them out of action at 11.15 a.m.

### *General Narrative.*

When the mishap occurred to his mounted infantry and cavalry, MAJOR Y. rode on after the former, and halted them under cover south of the ranges. He succeeded also in getting his cavalry in hand again after a short delay, and at about 11.10 a.m. he was able to advance once more. This he did rapidly, sending a message to his guns to follow, as his chances of success depended on his crossing the river before the day was far advanced.

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His guns, however, did not follow, as we have seen, and his troubles in other respects were not over, for at 11.20 a.m., while trotting at full stretch in extended formation as before, his leading files near JOCKEY HALL came under fire of the dismounted Red cavalry, which had been sent from MONUMENT HILL.

The Red troops were well posted, and checked the advance of the Blue Force, which had to turn away and seek cover if it did not wish to be cut up by the close fire of its opponents. A short engagement followed, in which the Red troops, a squadron and a half in all, held their own. The Red cavalry COMMANDER, however, got a message from MONUMENT HILL, sent through the signallers at MOTEENARON, to tell him to fall back on KILCULLEN BRIDGE, to which point the guns were about to be retired. He accordingly, at 11.25 a.m., drew off his command, and moved on to KNOCKNAGARM CROSS-ROADS, where he was so closely pressed by the Blue mounted infantry, that he had again to dismount his men and make a stand.

Meantime, at 11.25 a.m., MAJOR K. at MONUMENT HILL saw that it was time for him to move on to his rendezvous at KILCULLEN BRIDGE. He had already sent signals to A Squadron to fall back in the same direction, as it would be highly inconvenient if the Blue Forces proved too much for the squadron and the troops of B Squadron, which probably by this time were with it, and were able to get past the Red cavalry to KILCULLEN. He therefore gave the order for a rapid move to the BRIDGE *vid* FIELD'S HOTEL and KENNEAGH CROSS-ROADS.

It took the battery twenty-five minutes to get to KILCULLEN BRIDGE with its escort. On arriving near the

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BRIDGE, MAJOR K. rode on, and, crossing over, got up on the south-east slope of KILCULLEN HILL. With his glasses he made out his cavalry at KNOCKNAGARM CROSS-ROADS, just remounting to fall back, under a persistent fire from hostile troops posted on the hills west of the cross-roads. Turning his head to the right, he was glad to note the leading scouts of Red infantry making their way to the BRIDGE round the lower south-western slopes of KILCULLEN HILL.

As the horse-artillery guns came up, MAJOR K. put them in position on the underfeature of the main hill, situated just east of the main road, about 700 yards from the BRIDGE, and opened fire; target the Blue troops at KNOCKNAGARM CROSS-ROADS, range about 2000 yards. Under cover of this fire the Red squadron and troops were able to retire safely upon the BRIDGE. They dismounted under cover of the houses on the east bank, and disposed themselves so as to command the approaches to the BRIDGE.

MAJOR X., on arrival with the three companies under MAJOR L. at the river, directed the COMMANDER to post them on the 400 contour, south slope of KILCULLEN HILL, from which the BRIDGE and its surroundings could be brought well under fire. Half a company with the machine gun was sent to the east side of the BRIDGE, to occupy the houses there, and to be prepared to rake the BRIDGE itself with a heavy fire if necessary.

MAJOR Y., not knowing of the presence of infantry at KILCULLEN, and relying on the fire action of his mounted infantry, made a forward movement and brought the Red artillery under a severe fire. He then thought he ought

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to be able to carry the BRIDGE, and made a determined advance with the Blue cavalry and mounted infantry with that intention. These troops, galloping up to the western entrance of the VILLAGE under fire of the cavalry of the Red Force, which they did not seem to mind very much, dismounted under cover of the houses, and then moved rapidly in several bodies, one following the other through the twisting VILLAGE street towards the BRIDGE. They were well covered by the houses until they neared the BRIDGE, but here quite suddenly, to their great bewilderment, as they were attempting to force a passage, they encountered a perfect hail of bullets from the three companies of Red infantry, the dismounted Red cavalry, and also from the Red machine gun.

It was too much for the Blue assailants, and MAJOR Y. gave the order to retire. He was hurried in his movements by the fire, at closer range than was pleasant, of the horse-artillery guns under MAJOR K., which now opened upon the Blue mounted infantry as they got clear of the VILLAGE.

At this moment the UMPIRES, who had been thrown out by the rapid movements of the contending forces, came up, and the "Cease fire" was ordered to be sounded at 10 minutes past noon.

## *Summing up.*

The CHIEF UMPIRE, having assembled the officers concerned on the ground near the convent, asked the ASSISTANT UMPIRES on each side to give their opinions as to the operations.

The ASSISTANT UMPIRE with the Eastern Force said

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there were no mistakes made in the conduct of the march of the convoy, and that the plan of the COMMANDER for a concentration at KILCULLEN BRIDGE by the covering party of infantry and the flank guard of cavalry and guns had been most successfully carried out, in such a manner as to checkmate the Western Force. Communication by signalling was well maintained between the different parts of the flank guard and the covering party on east bank during the day.

The ASSISTANT UMPIRE with the Western Force said he thought the raiding party had not enough "go" in it, to use a familiar expression, and that the COMMANDER should have had a better plan, and have carried it out more rapidly, in order to succeed in such an enterprise. A great deal of time was lost in the early advance.

The CHIEF UMPIRE said there was much truth in the remarks of the ASSISTANT UMPIRE as regards the Western Force. He concurred in thinking the advance had not been rapid enough to effect its purpose. If the Blue COMMANDER had seen from the first that KILCULLEN BRIDGE was the best objective for his force, and not ATHGARVAN BRIDGE, he might have got over the river before he could be stopped. It was only 8 miles from TULLY WEST CROSS-ROADS to KILCULLEN HILL, and mounted troops should find no difficulty in passing over that distance without drawing up, when necessity for such action arose.

The COMMANDER of the Eastern Force had avoided all pitfalls, and to him must be awarded the honours of the day. He was ably supported by his subordinate leaders, MAJORS K. and L.

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*Comments.*

This study forms a good example of the great advantages which present themselves to the COMMANDER who strikes out a line for himself of bold initiative; and shows what opportunity may offer itself to a dashing cavalry raider, in rapidly securing an important tactical advantage by the use of superior mobility. The lesson is none the less instructive from the fact, that the points in question are brought out more by what the Blue cavalry raider failed to do than by what he did do, in the scheme we have considered.

The Blue COMMANDER in this exercise wasted his time most lamentably in the early stages of his advance, and his plan was too dependent on what might turn up on the way to be a masterly project. KILCULLEN HILL should have been his objective from the very commencement. He should have sent a portion of his mounted infantry to the eastern end of the CAMP, where amongst the huts and unoccupied buildings they might have bluffed and feinted and drawn the enemy's attention, while in the mean time the rest of the Blue Force was going for all it was worth for KILCULLEN BRIDGE, as hard as men, horses, and guns could trot and gallop. Arrived at KILCULLEN in advance of the enemy, the guns with an escort might be placed on the hill, while a dash round by CORBALLY CROSS-ROADS would have enabled the convoy to be headed. The guns from KILCULLEN HILL could bear on either ROSETOWN or CORBALLY CROSS-ROADS, at 1800 or 2000 yards' ranges in either

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case, and if the wagons could be brought under their fire, the cavalry and mounted infantry might then have a chance with the escort.

Whether such an attack would have any certainty of success in presence of the great disparity of numbers in the Red and Blue Forces can hardly be decided. The attack would, however, have the merit of enabling the assailants to strike a good blow at their opponents, even if the undertaking were of a risky character.

As regards the Red COMMANDER, the UMPIRES seem to have considered he did very well. With that opinion we will not quarrel, but it appears, notwithstanding, that he would have done still better had he sent on his troop of cavalry on the east bank quickly to KILCULLEN BRIDGE, to hold that important point of passage until the infantry could reach it.

One other point brought prominently to notice in this scheme may be mentioned, and that is the necessity of a COMMANDER being able to make rapid and accurate estimates of time and space with the aid of his map. Unless such calculations can be worked out correctly, all the conditions of combined movements may be based on unreliable data.

N.B.—In the process of the topographical correction and examination of the foregoing narrative of an idealized tactical operation on the CURRAGH, referred to in the introductory remarks to the scheme, it has been brought to the notice of the AUTHOR that he has unwittingly taken the troops, at the latter part of the exercise, on to ground beyond the boundaries to which they are restricted at manœuvres—notably at and about

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KILCULLEN HILL. To work this scheme without KILCULLEN HILL would be like playing HAMLET without the PRINCE OF DENMARK. As the narrative has been compiled with no actual troops on the ground, it is hoped that the inaccuracy may be considered unimportant.

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# Q.

## TACTICAL OPERATION AT THE CURRAGH.

(*See Maps* 7, 8.)

ADVANCED BRIGADE *v.* OUTPOSTS.

*July* 11, 19—.

THIS scheme was set at the CURRAGH in July, 1894, and was worked out in full detail by the troops concerned as a manœuvre between opposing forces, in connection with training in field medical work of the Army Medical Service.

The narrative of the operation was subsequently published in orders, with the remarks of the UMPIRES and of the GENERAL COMMANDING. The AUTHOR, having lately been granted permission by the OFFICER IN COMMAND at the CURRAGH to make use of the scheme, has thoroughly revised the report, and brought the movements up to date in all particulars. The narrative has since been submitted to a careful topographical examination on the ground by an officer expert in such matters.

### *General Idea.*

The headquarters of an Eastern Force (Blue) have reached STONEBROOK, while the Advanced Brigade of a

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Western Force (Red) is crossing the river BARROW at MONASTEREVIN.

### *Special Idea. Eastern Force (Blue).*

At 9.15 a.m., July 11, 19—, when the following despatch was handed to the COMMANDER of the Eastern Force, a troop of dragoons and a field battery were on the ATHGARVAN road; the East Kent Regt. and the Royal Irish Fus. were on the KILCULLEN road; heads of columns at the junction of these roads, near FIELD'S HOTEL.

"From G. O. COMMANDING,
To O. Cg. Eastern Force.

"STONEBROOK,
*July* 11, 19—, 8 *a.m.*

"Place outposts facing west, extending from SOLDIERS' HOME, LUMM VILLE, to I BLOCK, CURRAGH ENCAMPMENT. Resist any hostile advance, and in no case allow the enemy to drive you from the FREETHS HILLS, which I shall wish to occupy later in the day."

MAJOR C. commanded the Eastern Force. His infantry were permitted to move at once, but the mounted troops were not to cross the HEADQUARTER road before 9.40 a.m.

### *Special Idea. Western Force (Red).*

At 9.20 a.m., July 11, 19—, when the following despatch was handed to the COMMANDER of the Western Force, a troop of hussars, a battery field artillery, the Royal Irish Regt., the Lancashire Fus., the Hampshire Regt., and the Royal Munster Fus. were drawn up, the infantry battalions in assembly formation, between the GREAT SOUTHERN and WESTERN RAILWAY and the CALLACHKNOCK

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road. A field hospital and bearer company were just south of the WEST ARCH.

"From G. O. COMMANDING, "KILDARE,
To O. Cg. Western Force. *July* 11, 19—, 9 *a.m.*

"Move by the north of the CURRAGH CAMP and secure the ATHGARVAN heights, attacking the enemy vigorously wherever met."

LIEUT.-COLONEL W. commanded the Western Force, which was not to move till 9.40 a.m.

Topographical Hints :—Counting from the centre of the CURRAGH ENCAMPMENT, as the crow flies, MONASTEREVIN lies 9½ miles W., and STONEBROOK 7½ miles E.

## *Narrative. Eastern Force (Blue).*

MAJOR C., on receiving the Special Idea and the despatch mentioned at 9.15 a.m., took out his maps of the ground and proceeded to consider his position. He called for the commanders of the infantry battalions, and told them they were each to furnish four companies for an outpost line in two sections, extending from LUMM VILLE to I BLOCK, CURRAGH ENCAMPMENT; Royal Irish Fus. right section, East Kent Regt. left section; and directing them to send off the outpost companies at once under the Second in Command of each battalion, who would act as Commanders of sections, they themselves waiting to receive written orders.

MAJOR C. then drew up the following "operation orders," and gave copies to his officers :—

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**Outpost Orders; by O. Cg. Eastern Force (Blue).**

To Os Cg. Units. KILCULLEN ROAD,
*July* 11, 19—, 9.30 *a.m.*

1. The enemy is reported to be advancing from KILDARE.

2. Our main body is at STONEBROOK, but will move forward to occupy FREETHS HILLS later in the day.

3. The force under my command as per margin, will form outposts facing west to resist enemy's advance.

*One troop.*
*One battery F.A.*
*East Kent Regt.*
*Royal Irish Fus.*

4. The outposts will extend from the SOLDIERS' HOME at LUMM VILLE to I BLOCK, and will be in two sections. The Royal Irish Fus. will occupy the right or northern section from SOLDIERS' HOME to the centre of outpost line, with four outpost companies disposed as piquets, supports, and section reserve. COMMANDER, MAJOR D.

The East Kent Regt. will hold the left or southern section, extending on the left to I BLOCK, with four outpost companies similarly disposed. COMMANDER, MAJOR E.

5. The remaining four companies of each battalion will form a general reserve on the FREETHS HILLS.

6. The cavalry acting as outpost mounted troops will reconnoitre to the front and also round the south flank of the enemy, to ascertain his strength and line of advance.

7. The battery will take position on the FREETHS HILLS.

8. In case of attack, the main line of resistance will be FREETHS HILLS, but the line of piquets and supports will be held as long as possible.

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9. No fires will be lighted by the outposts.

10. An examining post will be placed on the road near HEADQUARTER BLOCK.

11. Signalling will be established by the cavalry between CAMP INN HILL and FREETHS HILLS.

12. I shall be with the artillery.

(Sd.) C.,
MAJOR.

Personally issued in writing.

The officers in command of battalions rode off at once on receiving the orders, and took with them their remaining half battalions. The battery also was permitted to move to the FREETHS HILLS, as its position would be in rear of the HEADQUARTER road, which was not to be crossed before 9.40 a.m. by the mounted troops under the Special Idea.

At 9.40 a.m. the cavalry went to the front, and MAJOR C. also proceeded as far forward as the outpost line.

He found the Royal Irish Fus. had a piquet, half of No. 1 Company, at the SOLDIERS' HOME, the other half company being in support. Another piquet, south of the first one, was between the roads, furnished by No. 2 Company, which also added a half company to the support. The section reserve consisted of Nos. 3 and 4 Companies, and was concealed in a hollow N.E. of KNOLL 375.

The East Kent Regt. had two outpost companies, Nos. 1 and 2, on piquet and support duty; one piquet, half of No. 1, being on the north side of the HEADQUARTER BLOCK, and another piquet, half of No. 2, on the south side of it, the supports to these piquets being at cross-roads in the hollow east of HEADQUARTER BLOCK.

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The section reserve consisted of Nos. 3 and 4 companies, and was posted near the CEMETERY.

The COMMANDER then visited the general reserve, which was composed of two half battalions, placed at the south side of the FREETHS HILLS, on the north of the main road, in a sheltered position. He explained to the commanders that they would probably have to act separately in support of the outpost line, and that the companies would be summoned to the front as required.

MAJOR C. then joined the battery on FREETHS HILLS, and at 10.10 a.m. received complete news by signal from his cavalry on CAMP INN HILL as to the march and strength of the enemy. The Western Force had reached the RACE of the BLACK PIG at 10 a.m. Four infantry battalions, with a battery of field artillery, composed the force. Some cavalry acting as scouts were also seen.

The reports from the Blue cavalry were continued from time to time as the enemy approached nearer, giving detailed information as to the line of advance of the hostile force; but by 10.20 a.m. the signalling post at CAMP INN HILL was obliged to be vacated by the Blue cavalry. At 10.25 a.m. the Blue battery was moved forward to a position near No. 375 KNOLL, on the N.E. side of the LOUGHBANE road, not far from the Constabulary Barracks.

At 10.35 a.m. the Eastern artillery officer, who had a pair of excellent field-glasses, detected Western infantry south of CAMP INN HILL. He opened fire at once, having a good knowledge of the range. Five minutes later Western artillery came into action on CAMP INN HILL, as anticipated by the Eastern artillerist, who saw signs of intended occupation through his glasses. He was

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accordingly all ready for them, and changed target at once to the Western guns, which, after enduring a few rounds in silence, replied to the fire of the Blue artillery. The position of the Blue guns near KNOLL 375 did not appear to command that of the Red guns on CAMP INN HILL very satisfactorily. In consequence of this, at 10.50 a.m., the Eastern artillery again changed target to the Western infantry, whose leading line had now reached the MAGAZINE road.

By 11 a.m. the near approach of the Western infantry towards the southern section of the outposts threatened the position of the piquets north and south of the HEADQUARTER BLOCK. The senior officer thought it best to occupy this BLOCK, and summoned the neighbouring supports to his assistance. The Western artillery now changed its target to the Eastern infantry at the HEADQUARTER BLOCK, and the firing line of the Red Force, crossing the polo ground (just north of the WATER WORKS) in very extended order, engaged the Blue troops holding the HEADQUARTER BLOCK and adjoining ground.

This attack being pushed vigorously forward, the force of numbers prevailed, notwithstanding determined and protracted resistance from the East Kent Regt., and the post was captured by a portion of the assailants, whilst the remainder, passing it to the south side, assailed the Blue companies of the section reserve coming up in reinforcement; the reserve had to retire, falling partly back on the CEMETERY, partly towards RACE HORSE HILL.

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*Narrative. Western Force (Red).*

LIEUT.-COLONEL W., on receiving the Special Idea[1] and the despatch mentioned at 9.20 a.m., consulted his maps of the CURRAGH, and considered what he should do. Having determined upon his plan, he issued the following "operation orders:"—

**Advanced Brigade Orders; by O. Cg. Western Force (Red).**

No. 1. WESTERN CURRAGH,
To Os. Cg. Units. *July* 11th, 19—, 9.35 *a.m.*

1. The enemy is on the eastern side of the CURRAGH CAMP.

2. I intend to advance with my brigade as per margin, and drive back the enemy.

*One troop.*
*One battery F. A.*
*Hampshire Regt.*
*Royal Munster Fus.*
*Lancashire Fus.*
*Royal Irish Regt.*
*Bearer co.*

3. Cavalry will reconnoitre to front and flanks, and send me back good information.

4. Infantry will advance by the RACE of the BLACK PIG, covered by fifty selected scouts of leading battalion 600 yards in front. Hampshire Regt. next, with first four companies in two lines of skirmishers at 400 yards' distance, covering a frontage of 500 yards. Remaining companies (one to be detached as escort to artillery) at 400 yards' distance in a line of small columns. The Royal Munster Fus. at a similar distance formed in a line of

[1] For Special Idea Western Force, see page 312.

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small columns, a company to protect each flank being in fours. At 600 yards' distance the Lancashire Fus. and Royal Irish Regt. will march in line of assembly columns, Lancashire Fus. on the right.

5. Artillery with its escort to move on right flank of Royal Munster Fus.

6. Field hospital to be fixed near the WEST ARCH. Bearer company to follow the troops, and establish dressing and collecting stations as may be desirable.

7. I shall be with the artillery.

(Sd.) W.,
LIEUT.-COLONEL.

Issued personally in writing.

At 9.40 a.m. the Western cavalry rode off, followed ten minutes later by the infantry and artillery.

At 10.5 a.m. the first intimation of the enemy's presence was signalled back by cavalry from KNOLL 375 (just south of NEWBRIDGE road), to effect that the enemy had placed outposts at LUMM VILLE.

At 10.15 a.m. the Commander of the Western Force was made fully aware of the position of the Blue outposts, which extended from the SOLDIERS' HOME to the HEADQUARTER BLOCK or thereabouts. Strong reserves were said to be posted on the FREETHS HILLS.

At 10.20 a.m. the situation of the Western Force was as follows: The leading portion of the Hampshire Regt., having moved by HERBERT LODGE, had now its right flank just west of ST. LEGERS BOTTOMS; the Royal Munster Fus. extended from HERBERT LODGE to near ROCKY KNOLL; the Lancashire Fus. were west of HERBERT LODGE

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in rear of the Royal Munster Fus.; and the Royal Irish Regt., having detached itself more to the north during the advance, was approaching FLAT RATH. The artillery was west of KNOLL 375, near ST. LEGERS BOTTOMS.

By this time the Western COMMANDER, having received all necessary intelligence as to his opponents, formed up his troops for attack and issued the following orders:—

**Attack Orders; by O. Cg. Western Force (Red).**

No. 2. 375 KNOLL, near ST. LEGERS BOTTOMS,
To Os. Cg. Units. July 11, 19—, 10.20 *a.m.*

1. The enemy is in position on FREETHS HILLS, with outposts in front.

2. I am about to attack him in following formation: Hampshire Regt. on right, with Royal Munster Fus. on left; Royal Irish Regt. on extreme left. Lancashire Fus. in reserve in rear of right battalion. The right and extreme left or flank attacks to be pushed home. The Royal Munster Fus. to make a holding attack.

3. Artillery with its escort to take post on CAMP INN HILL and support the attacks.

4. I shall be with the artillery.

(Sd.) W.,
LIEUT.-COLONEL.

Issued personally in writing to Adjutants.
Special copy by Staff Officer to Royal Irish Regt.

The troops moved forward to get into their relative positions. The cavalry were shortly afterwards ordered

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to fall back and form an escort for the guns, relieving the company Hampshire Regt., which then joined the Royal Irish Regt.

The intention of the COMMANDER was to make a simultaneous attack with the Hampshire Regt., supported by Lancashire Fus. on the left of the Blue position about FIELD'S HOTEL, while the Royal Irish Regt., moving by the north slopes of CAMP INN HILL, should at the same time attack the right of the position, the Royal Munster Fus. holding the enemy in front.

These details were explained to the adjutants when handing over the orders for attack, and the STAFF OFFICER who was sent to the Royal Irish Regt. was directed to make it clearly understood what that battalion was to do.

At 10.35 a.m. the right battalion of the Western Force, when crossing a feature south of CAMP INN HILL, came apparently into view, as it was saluted by shrapnel fire from the centre of the Blue position.

At 10.40 a.m. the Western artillery came into action on CAMP INN HILL, when the Eastern artillery changed their target and fired, rather feebly it seemed, upon the Red artillery, which promptly replied.

At 10.50 a.m. the leading part of the first line of the Western infantry, in very extended order, had reached the MAGAZINE road, and the Eastern artillery changed target again in their favour. The Royal Irish Regt. was by this time north of CAMP INN HILL, moving on the far side of the KILDARE—NEWBRIDGE road in direction of the RANGER'S LODGE.

At 11 a.m. the Western artillery changed target to the



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Blue infantry. The firing line of the Western Force, crossing the polo ground—not without considerable loss—engaged the troops occupying the HEADQUARTER BLOCK, where the left piquets of the outposts seemed to have concentrated, and also to be reinforced by supports from the rear.

The contest here was protracted, but the Hampshire Regt., being in greater force, would not be denied, and the post was captured, the Blue defenders being driven back and retiring on the CEMETERY, and also towards RACE HORSE HILL.

## *General Narrative.*

After the special struggle for the possession of HEADQUARTER BLOCK, the engagement became more general in its character. In the centre the line of the Royal Munster Fus. extended from a point 200 yards east of the WATERWORKS to near the junction of the HEADQUARTER and LOUGHBANE roads. The Lancashire Fus. in reserve were just north of the MAGAZINE, while the Royal Irish Regt. was still some way off on the extreme left of the RANGER'S LODGE.

At 10 minutes past 11 the Hampshire Regt. advanced on either side of the road from HEADQUARTER BLOCK to FIELD'S HOTEL, and came under a heavy fire from the Eastern infantry about KNOLL 375. The Royal Munster Fus. occupied the KNOLL east of HEADQUARTER BLOCK, moving forward for that purpose.

At 11.15 a.m. the Hampshire Regt., approaching the

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heights above DONNELLY'S HOLLOW, were much exposed to the fire of the East Kent Regt. there posted; the Royal Munster Fus., leaving the KNOLL near HEADQUARTER BLOCK, advanced at the same hour and occupied the ditch west of the LOUGHBANE HOLLOW. At this time the four leading companies of the Royal Irish Regt. reached the SOLDIERS' HOME, the other half battalion being further west.

At 11.20 a.m. the leading half battalion of the Royal Irish Regt., in an open formation, attacked a company Royal Irish Fus. of the Blue Force, which held the extreme right of the position. Five minutes later KNOLL 375 was crowned by the Royal Munster Fus., for whom the moment had arrived for turning their demonstration into a real attack. The Blue battery fell back in good order to FREETHS HILLS; and the Lancashire Fus. on the right, having moved south of the HEADQUARTER BLOCK, pushed forward in support of the Hampshire Regt., in the attack of the heights above DONELLY'S HOLLOW and of RACE HORSE HILL.

At 11.30 a.m. the Western artillery moved forward and took up a position just south of the SOLDIERS' HOME. The "Halt" now sounded, and the "Cease fire" followed a little later.

### *Care for the Wounded during Action.*

At 9.50 a.m., on instructions from the COMMANDER of the Western Force, the field hospital was pitched on ground in vicinity of WEST ARCH. The bearer company

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advanced, keeping about 300 to 500 yards behind the rearmost battalions of infantry.

At 10.35 a.m. the bearer company halted and established a dressing-station in rear of HERBERT LODGE. Here they found they were exposed, so about 20 minutes later they moved to cover about 30 yards to the north. Five wagons remained here, while the other wagons with the water-cart and stretcher party went on, and fixed up a collecting-station at 375 KNOLL (near the NEWBRIDGE road), the wagons being on the reverse slope. The stretcher party advanced under one of the surgeons to search the field for wounded. As there was no ambulance employed on the other side, orders were given to care for any wounded men who were found belonging to the enemy, as well as for those of the Red Force.

At 11.15 a.m. the first wounded man arrived, walking, at the collecting-station, which had by this time moved to a spot west of CAMP INN HILL, where the Western guns were in action. The collecting-station was therefore in the line of fire directed by the enemy on these guns, and had shortly to be moved again. At this time the stretcher party were advancing on extreme right of the field, on a front of about 250 yards, and were due north of C BLOCK, although at the moment the fight was hottest near the SOLDIERS' HOME; very soon numbers of wounded men arrived, passing to the north of the KNOLL (375 feet) just east of MAGAZINE road; these saw the flag of the collecting-station, which by then had advanced to the MAGAZINE road, and went or were carried to it.

At 11.20 a.m. wounded came in numbers, being brought from the SOLDIERS' HOME and COURT HOUSE, the stretcher

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party working on a front of 300 yards: 161 wounded were admitted to hospital—

| | |
|---|---|
| Gunshot wounds—97 slight, 8 severe, 1 dangerous ... | 106 |
| Sabre wounds—23 slight, 4 severe ... ... ... | 27 |
| Bayonet wounds—20 slight, 2 severe, 1 dangerous ... | 23 |
| Other injuries—2 slight, 3 severe ... ... ... | 5 |
| Total ... ... ... ... | 161 |

## *Summing up.*

The CHIEF UMPIRE now summoned the COMMANDERS of each side, the ASSISTANT UMPIRES, and the TROOP LEADERS, together with the PRINCIPAL MEDICAL OFFICER of the Western side, to accompany him while he examined into the arrangements for the ambulance work during the action.

The CHIEF UMPIRE thought, on inspection, that the dressing-station near HERBERT LODGE would have been more satisfactorily placed 600 yards further west, in rear of the small RATH which is there to be found. The collecting-station on reverse slope of the KNOLL 375 (next NEWBRIDGE road) was not fixed sufficiently low down, and when shifted to the west side of CAMP INN HILL it was put in a still worse position, being in the continuation of the path of projectiles aimed at the Western guns placed on summit of the hill. This was a serious mistake. The stretcher party, as reported by the ASSISTANT UMPIRE of the Western Force, was not extended sufficiently to search the field thoroughly, and was, moreover, not directed to the hottest part of the fight.

With these exceptions, which he felt bound to notice,



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the CHIEF UMPIRE thought the field medical work was well carried out, and the field hospital was certainly placed in an excellent position.

The officers concerned were subsequently assembled at CAMP INN HILL, when the opinion of the ASSISTANT UMPIRES on the operations was called for.

The ASSISTANT UMPIRE with the Eastern Force said that, so far as he could see, the cavalry scouted well, and sent in frequent and reliable information. The artillery took up the best position which could be obtained for general purposes of defence, but it did not seem to enable the guns to bring CAMP INN HILL well under fire. The infantry held on too long to HEADQUARTER BLOCK, and consequently sustained unnecessary loss. They, however, conducted their ultimate retirement steadily.

The COMMANDER of the Eastern Force should, he thought, have had part of his cavalry available in case, early in the action, he had wished to push his guns forward for a temporary purpose. The absence of any available cavalry would have prevented his doing so.

The ASSISTANT UMPIRE with the Western Force said the cavalry on his side were well handled and sent back good information, but arrangements should have been made to keep back the enemy's scouts, who hung about and scrutinized every movement of the Western Force, while it was advancing towards the outpost line.

The Western artillery took up obviously the best position, but appeared slow in coming into action.

The infantry advanced in modern attacking formation across the open in excellent order, but subsequently appeared to spread out unduly under the influence of the

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enemy's fire, so as to give an appearance of weakness, although they were in reality of great strength compared with their adversaries. The advance of the left battalion was too slow or not accurately timed. When it did come on it was well directed, but its attack would have had twice the effect had it been simultaneous with that made on HEADQUARTER BLOCK.

The CHIEF UMPIRE said he agreed with the criticism of the ASSISTANT UMPIRES. On both sides he might well say the scouting was excellent; the scouts of the Eastern Force took post behind the gorse patches on the northern slopes of KNOCK AENACH, watching and reporting every move of the enemy during his progress along the RACE of the BLACK PIG, and over the open ground towards KEEGAN'S BANK. This showed how important it is for a COMMANDER to protect the march of his force from prying hostile view by detaching to the heights cavalry or infantry patrols. In his opinion, the CHIEF UMPIRE said, he strongly believed that infantry patrols were the best. No cavalry scouts should be allowed to get within sight of the march of a column, and if rifle fire judiciously applied could not keep them off, it behoved us to look to the shooting of our infantry. On this occasion the cavalry scouts had done their best, with marked success, but he warned them that they would not find it so easy in actual warfare. Scouting was becoming more difficult every day as the shooting of the infantry improved.

The Western battery walked into position on CAMP INN HILL. It would have been better if it had come up rapidly and unexpectedly. Its intended advent on the hill was disclosed long before it arrived, by the presence of range-

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finders, umpires, and various mounted officers. The Eastern guns were unable to take sufficient advantage of this, having come into action near KNOLL 375, instead of on the more commanding ground to the north-east.

With the exception that the HEADQUARTER BLOCK was held in too great strength, looking to the open nature of the line of retreat, the dispositions of the Blue infantry outposts were good, and the line of resistance on the FREETHS HILLS remained unshaken.

In the attack of the Western Force the left flank movement was too late. This flank should have been selected as the objective for the main assault, and no troops should have attempted to approach the LOUGHBANE HOLLOW east of HEADQUARTER BLOCK until the enemy had been driven back from the neighbouring heights.

### *Comments.*

The most important point to note in this scheme, is the partial breakdown of the flank attack on the Blue outposts by the western battalion on the extreme flank, owing to its not being up to time in the movement. Unless combined attacks are carefully synchronized, they lose half their value. The holding attack was well carried out, and the decisive attack against the enemy's left was pushed well home, but the combination on the whole was not a complete success.

The value of good signalling arrangements is brought out incidentally in this scheme, and also the important aid which careful scouting on the part of the cavalry is to a COMMANDER.

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Opposite page 328.

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The surprise effect of artillery fire from unexpected directions would have been greater if there had been more decision in the conduct of this arm.

The Blue outpost line was strongly posted, and had substantial reserves to back it up. Looking, however, to the powerful nature of the decisive attack made by the Red troops on the left of the Blue line, it was a mistake to suppose that HEADQUARTER BLOCK could hold out as a post, and its prolonged resistance was a tactical error on the part of the outpost leaders.

The choice of localities for the care of the wounded is one which requires an instinctive knowledge of where the fight is going to be most keenly contested, and some amount of tactical experience is required before the correct sites can be accurately selected by the medical officers in charge.

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## FINAL REMARKS.

In presenting to the reader these examples, in which the tactical principles involved and the topographical features of the battle-ground have been jointly considered, the aim and view of the Author, whenever his influence has been able to be exerted, have always been the same, viz. to establish with best effect a preponderance of fire power over the enemy, from and against the most important tactical points.

The mode of accomplishing this superiority of fire will naturally vary with the special conception of the problem by the individual Commander and his sub-leaders. If attacking, the Commander will occasionally alter his designs in order to mislead his opponent; if defending, he must constantly follow his adversary's lead, and no two engagements, even if fought by the same leaders on the same ground, would ever be exactly similar in their conception or in their execution. No absolute rule can, therefore, be laid down or followed for the attainment of this object.

Again, the varying effects of retardation in the actual carrying out of practical studies under war conditions, owing to the effect of losses and their influence on the *morale* of the troops engaged, are but feebly represented

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by the spasmodic "putting out of action" of portions of the forces by the Umpires, during the progress of the operations. Many allowances have to be made on this score.

The difficult questions of frontage, and number of men per lineal yard required to man or hold certain irregular lines of position or attack, have been endeavoured to be treated in an elastic manner, varying in each scheme with the numerical strength available, the size and nature of the ground, and the weapons in use; but in most cases they have necessarily been more or less left to the experience and judgment of the officers on the spot, their sub-leaders and subordinates.

Friendly critics are begged to take these and other obvious difficulties into account in passing judgment on the Schemes. Although worked out in each case on the ground—some with and some without troops—they are not free from a portion of the faults which are necessarily attendant on war games and paper tactics. On the other hand, for officers who have access to the training-grounds, and can study the problems thereon, they possess a special value.

W. J. S.

THE END.

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